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MATERIALS FROM ISRAELI KNESSET DEBATE ON PEACE TREATY

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MATERIALS FROM ISRAELI KNESSET DEBATE ON PEACE TREATY

Begin Speech

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[Speech by Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin at the opening of the Knesset debate on peace treaty with Egypt--live]

[Text] Mr Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Knesset:

I have come to report to the house on the latest moves which have brought us to this point, this blessed moment when I can stand before the members of the Knesset and propose to them that they approve a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. These moves began with a definite, justified and unavoidable Israeli no. I received an invitation from the President of the United States to go to Camp David to hold what was called a summit meeting with Dr Khalil, the prime minister of Egypt. I kindly proposed to the Knesset to reply to the President of the United States that, to my regret, I could not accept that invitation. The problem was not one of prestige. As for the personality of Dr Khalil, I met him in Jerusalem during As-Sadat's visit [words indistinct] very delightful and I would have met with him willingly. However, there is a difference in the status of the prime minister of Egypt and the prime minister of Israel. In order to explain this constitutional problem, we will add the United States of America to the example.

Mr Speaker, the President of the United States is both the head of state and the prime minister. Here, his honor the president heads the state, as stipulated in the first clause of the basic law entitled the President of the State. Is he the head of the authority which acts? The reply is no. Why is this so? Because it is stated in the first clause of the law entitled The Government: The government is the authority that acts for the state, while the man bearing the title or filling the post of prime minister is, so it is written, the head of the executive authority. It is agreed that in Egypt the head of the executive authority is President as-Sadat, while the prime minister is appointed by him. The prime minister swears loyalty to him, to Mr as-Sadat. The president of Egypt can dismiss the prime minister of his government just as he appointed him. There is a difference in status.

Nevertheless, we would not have taken this difference into account. It was not a question of honor, nor one of prestige that confronted us, but the problem: Through such a meeting will we serve the matter of peace or, perhaps to the contrary, will we harm it? There was no doubt as far as we were concerned. If I were to attend a summit conference of this type, not only would we not advance the matter of peace, we would harm it. Why? At that time we already knew of the latest proposals which Egypt had submitted and which the United States was supporting since our foreign minister received them at Camp David. Later, I will reveal the contents of these two very grave proposals that were submitted to us. Obviously our foreign minister stated: They are not acceptable to Israel. What could I have done had I attended such a tripartite meeting? I would have said, with all due respect to the President of the United States and also to Egyptian Prime Minister Dr Khalil: These proposals are not acceptable to Israel. Therefore, the conference would have ended as it began. Maybe within an hour Dr Khalil would have told me: If this is the way it is, I am going to Cairo. I would have replied to him, with all due respect and in all sincerity: If this is so, I am returning to Jerusalem.

What would have happened after that? With whom would anyone have been able to meet? Would President as-Sadat have agreed to the foreign minister or the defense minister conducting the negotiations? Would President as-Sadat then have agreed to meet with me? Of course not. That means that, in fact, we would have achieved two no's and an indefinite postponement of the whole peacemaking process.

Therefore, with the agreement of the Cabinet, I informed the President of the United States that, with all due respect, I could not accept his invitation to go and meet with Dr Khalil and with him. As opposed to this, I would certainly be prepared, at any time convenient to the President of the United States, to go to Washington in order to hold talks with him about the problems of the area and the peace process.

The President phoned me that same afternoon and asked me to go that week. Had I been able, I would have preferred to go the following Monday. One or two papers carried reports to the effect that the President told me to come, to come at once and that he, as it were, gave me an order to present myself. This is not correct. No such thing happened. This is not the style of the President of the United States. It is not his style to speak this way with anybody or with the prime minister of Israel. We speak with mutual respect and as free people. If we agree, we are happy about it; if we have differences of opinion, we do not conceal them. The President did not speak with me in this way. He explained to me that he had a certain timetable. Of course, he is the President of the United States. I am not only able, but I must take his timetable into consideration. Thus, we agreed that I would leave for the United States after a special Cabinet session and that I would arrive there on Thursday.

As I have already noted, before all this, at Camp David II, we were presented with two documents which could not have been graver. One involved Article VI of the peace treaty with Egypt. In order to understand the importance of the matter, the members of the Knesset will permit me to put before them the full text of Article VI/2 and VI/5, which both the foreign minister and I called--in my opinion correctly--the soul of the treaty. Article VI/2 says: "The parties undertake to fulfill in good faith their obligations under this treaty, without regard to action or inaction of any other party and independently of any instrument external to this treaty." Article VI/5 says: "Subject to Article 103 of the United Nations Charter, in the event of a conflict between the obligations of the parties under the present treaty and any of their other obligations, the obligations under this treaty will be binding and implemented."

When this is heard by someone who has not studied law, I admit that it appears to be a little complicated. It is very simple, as I will soon explain. These two paragraphs in Article VI are the soul of the treaty. The first paragraph stipulates that the treaty will be binding even if Syria insists on not joining the peace process. And who can force it to do so? I? President as-Sadat? We all know what the Syrians are saying today, not only about Israel, but also about Egypt and its president. Can the United States force Damascus to join the peace process? I said to the President of the United States in all frankness: With all your strength, not only can you not force Syria to come to the table, you will not even be able to force Jordan, despite the fact that you are supplying Jordan with its last bullet.

This is, in fact, the situation. If it were not for that article, everything would seem to depend on the will, the decision or the caprice of President al-Asad and King Husayn.

Then, at some point in time, this or that ruler of Egypt, this or that Egyptian Government could announce that, because no comprehensive settlement was achieved which also encompasses both Syria and Jordan, we declare that the peace treaty is nonexistent. Therefore, we specifically wrote here that the peace treaty will be independent of the actions or lack of action--action or inaction [last three words in English]--of any to other party in the Middle East.

Article VI/5 is a problem of peace or war. What does it say? We are signing a peace treaty with Egypt, but Egypt has signed dozens of agreements with Arab countries. We have not signed any agreement with any country. We stand alone. The truth is that I said this to the President of the United States when I was in Washington. He asked me whether I would be in favor of a mutual American-Israeli agreement. I replied affirmatively. Afterward, I announced publicly that, if the United States takes the initiative and proposes a mutual agreement to Israel, I would certainly recommend it to the government. But the initiative cannot come from the small country. It must be the initiative of the great power. So we will wait, if this is the case. But it is a fact that we are going to discuss this. We have never had any defense agreement or security agreement with any country in the world. On the other hand, Egypt has signed dozens of agreements of this sort with the most cruel enemies of Israel, including Libya and Iraq. The Egyptian agreement is the only one that stipulates that its objective is--I am quoting--the liberation of Eretz Yisra'el, the liberation of Palestine [previous four words in English], and I do not have to explain to the members of the Knesset that those words have only one meaning: the destruction of the State of Israel. Only then can what both of them call the liberation of Palestine [last four words in English] be achieved.

That being so, we said: You have such and such treaties that may contradict the peace treaty, let us determine that if such a contradiction exists, what will be binding? It is clear: the peace treaty, the commitments in accordance with that treaty. Otherwise, it has no significance. Otherwise, let us assume that if Syria attacks Israel, and I explained this to the President of the United States without any hesitation, then Israel will defend itself, but it must be known that the problem is not just that of a healthy strategy, but of the needs of life. Israel defends itself by a counterattack. If it is attacked, it makes a counterattack. It has no other way. It cannot defend Tel Aviv. It cannot defend Jaffa. The same goes for Netanya, under any circumstances, for then it will already have its back to the sea. The needs of life: If we have chosen life, we must always be prepared, in the case of attack, to transfer the war without delay to the enemy's territory and make a counterattack. And so, I told the President of the United States: Let us assume that Syria attacks us and we make a counterattack. There is no doubt of that. We, in the Yom Kippur War, made such a counterattack and we were 40 km from Damascus. I myself saw with my naked eye the entrances to Damascus from a vantage point. And if we are again attacked by the Syrians with such a counterattack we can again reach within 10 km of Damascus, and even less that that; certainly it is possible and then what will Damascus do? It will call on Cairo and say: You signed a mutual defense pact with us, come and save us. How can you help us? Attack Israel and by so doing you will draw Israel's forces from the northern front to the southern one.

And in spite of the fact that we signed a peace treaty, perhaps after a few years, and none of us lives forever, at a certain moment we could have a war both in the north and in the south, both with a country which did not sign a peace treaty with us and continues to be in a state of war with us and also with the country which signed a peace treaty with us which, in its first article, says that the state of war between us has come to an end and we are making full peace between the two countries. Therefore that article, Article VI/5, like VI/2, both of them are so important. And here, at Camp David, the foreign minister [words indistinct, break in transmission] in contradiction of the fact that this treaty is signed in the context of a comprehensive peace settlement, a comprehensive peace settlement [last three words in English] in accordance with the framework rules for peace in the Middle East which were agreed upon at Camp David. And afterward the treaty says: The commitments included in the treaty are subordinate to the only precedent determined in Article 103 of the UN Charter, and nothing in the treaty detracts from that principle or recognizes any other precedent.

Mr Speaker, the meaning of this list of interpretation is that there is no longer any significance either to Article VI/2 nor to Article VI/5. Just the contrary. In fact, according to this list of interpretation, if we had signed it, as we were asked to at Camp David II, then we would have knowingly permitted the violation of the peace treaty and the cancellation of Articles VI and II and we would have given treaties Egypt has signed with dozens of Arab countries supremacy over the peace treaty. Why is this so true? Because we signed the peace treaty after those treaties were signed and we knew their contents. This is not a formal question of the Vienna Charter regarding international agreements. It is really a question of contents. We knew this, volente no fit in juria [last five words in Latin] and nevertheless we signed as though to the same list of interpretation. This means that those treaties would be binding and put into operation and the peace treaty would be null and void and so Articles VI/2 and VI/5 no longer would have any significance. That is the reason why our foreign minister said a definite no to that proposal. We will not sign such a list of interpretation.

The second document that the U.S. delegation submitted to the foreign minister at Camp David, with the agreement of the Egyptians, at their initiative or certainly with their knowledge, is what is called the joint letter. That is a letter which President as-Sadat and I must sign and it will be sent to the President of the United States. I will read you the whole letter and and I request your patience for 5 minutes; the words are so important that, in my opinion, it is a duty for the members of Knesset to know the contents of documents before they are approved.

This is what is written in the draft submitted to the foreign minister at Camp David on 23 February 1979. This was the seventh draft submitted to us. It was worse than all its predecessors. This letter authorizes an agreement between the governments of Egypt and Israel as follows:

The governments of Egypt and Israel recall that it was previously agreed at Camp David in regard to the two documents included bearing the names "Framework for Peace in the Middle East" and "Framework for Signing a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel," which were signed in the White House on 17 September 1978, that for the sake of achieving an encompassing peace settlement in accordance with the frameworks referred to above, Egypt and Israel, which sign this letter with the signing of the peace treaty, will begin carrying out those instructions regarding the establishment of the self-governing authority with full autonomy, full autonomy, for the West Bank--that is what it says in English: full autonomy for the West Bank [previous six words in English] and for the Gaza Strip.

They have agreed to begin negotiations within a month of the exchange of the ratification papers of the peace treaty.

In accordance with this framework for peace in the Middle East, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is invited to join in the negotiations. The delegations of Egypt and Jordan will be able to include Arabs of Eretz Yisra'el from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, or other Arabs of Eretz Yisra'el, as will be mutually agreed upon by them. Egypt confirms its willingness to take upon itself Jordan's role in the event that the latter decides not to take part in the negotiations. The aim of the negotiations will be to facilitate the establishment of the self-governing authority, the modalities [previous two words in English] of which are to be determined in free elections, to define its authority and responsibility before the elections in accordance with the framework for peace in the Middle East and to agree upon them. It says further on: The two governments agree to negotiate continuously and in good faith so as to conclude these negotiations rapidly. They also agree that the objective of the negotiations is the founding of the self-governing authority with full autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza. In order to make this process easier, they are prepared to begin implementing the framework for peace in the Middle East in the Gaza Strip. In this event, the abovementioned invitation to Jordan and to the Arabs of Eretz Yisra'el will remain open so that they can participate in the continuation of the actualization of the self-governing authority, with those changes to be agreed upon.

Egypt will appoint liaison officers in the Gaza Strip as of the beginning of the negotiations. Egypt and Israel will determine for themselves the target for the completion of the negotiations, with the elections being held within 1 year of the beginning of these negotiations. The self-governing authority will be established and enter office, possibly first in the Gaza Strip, within 1 month of being elected. While the self-governing authority is being established and entering office, the transition period of 5 years referred to in the Framework for Peace in the Middle East will begin. This refers only to the leadership of autonomy in Gaza. At this point, the period of 5 years will already have begun. The Israeli military government that is over the civilian administration will retreat so that it can be replaced by the self-governing authority, as detailed in the Framework for Peace in the Middle East. There will then be a withdrawal of Israeli Armed Forces and there will be a redeployment of Israeli forces that remain in defined security zones. This letter also confirms our understanding that the U.S. Government participates fully in all the stages of the negotiations.

When we received this document from the foreign minister--who, of course, had replied with a definite no in regard to the possibility of accepting it--Foreign Ministry legal adviser Dr Rosenne and I found seven things that completely contradicted the Camp David agreement in that letter I have just read to you and things to which we had not even conceived of agreeing to or putting our signature on. I will now cite all the contradictions:

First, there is no distinction in the Camp David agreement between Gaza and Judaea and Samaria. Negotiations are to be held between Israel, Jordan and Egypt over the application of autonomy in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza. There are two contradictions in that letter. We have never agreed that Egypt should come instead of Jordan. I will explain to the Knesset what we did agree upon.

The Camp David agreement says, and it is so written down and signed--and we will always honor our signature--that Israel, Jordan and Egypt will hold negotiations on the arrangements regarding autonomy. Jordan does not take part. Presumably, we could have said that we would wait until Jordan agrees to participate because that is what is written. We did not say this. We conceived the idea of autonomy fully believing that it is a pleasant Jewish and Zionist idea and we want to fulfill this idea. Therefore, to prove not only the seriousness of the approach but also our desire to carry out the arrangements regarding autonomy, we said: Let us write to each other that, despite the fact that Jordan is not participating, we--Israel and Egypt--agree to conduct these negotiations between us without Jordan. Thus, we prove that we have not and will not look for any ways to get out, as it were, of the negotiations over the arrangements regarding autonomy and its proper implementation. Jordan is not participating. We regret this. If, one day, it joins, fine. If not, we will hold negotiations with Egypt alone. But this is not what is written in this letter. It is written that Egypt will fulfill Jordan's role--Egypt will assume Jordan's role [previous five words in English]. We have never agreed to this. Egypt cannot assume Jordan's role. Egypt cannot give us peace in the east. So, we did not agree to this distortion and we drew the attention of the U.S. President to this special contradiction.

Third [as heard], the Camp David agreement does not mention any office [previous word in English] or any officer [previous word in English] of Egypt in Gaza. There was never any talk of this at Camp David in September. There was never any agreement about this. The matter was never mentioned. Why was it suddenly mentioned? What right has Egypt to establish a liaison office in the Gaza Strip? What is the Gaza Strip? It is a part of Eretz Yisra'el. In 1948, Egypt undertook aggression against and invaded Eretz Yisra'el, a country not belonging to it, and conquered a part of it--the name of this part is the Gaza Strip. It held onto that conquered part of Eretz Yisra'el for 19 years. What right does it have to be in Gaza? What status does it have in the Gaza Strip? We never agreed to any liaison office or any liaison officers.

In the Camp David agreement, and this is the fourth point, there is no target date. It is written here that within 1 year autonomy will be operative. We did not agree to such a date, neither at Camp David nor in New York at the airfield where we met with the secretary of state, and the Cabinet decided unanimously that Israel would not agree to any target date. I will explain why. One can say: A year is a long time. Why should you not agree to it? Our reply is this, and this is also how we explained it to the President of the United States in Washington: If there is a target date, any date, a fixed date for the implementation of autonomy, then that date itself will cancel it. Why is this very true? It is true because the murderers' organization called PLO will know exactly when to undertake the terror and acts of intimidation against autonomy so that there will be neither candidates nor electors. We have proof that it has already begun such acts of intimidation. The pressure will also increase if it knows that, let us assume, in another 3 months it will be necessary to go to the polls or in another 3 months the candidates have to register their names. Heaven forbid what it would then be capable of doing with the inhabitants of Ramallah or those of Bethlehem. If it murdered three people, that would be enough to insure there was no other candidate.

It could murder five people. They are capable of murdering five Arabs. This is no secret. Then there will no longer be a candidate and no more electors, and autonomy will be postponed for an unlimited length of time. [indistinct interjections by MK Tawfiq Tubi, who is called to order twice by Knesset Speaker Shamir]

Today I want to tell the communist members of the Knesset that the President of the United States is not sitting on the podium and today I will reply to these cries as... [shout of "entitled" from the hall] entitled? And I am not? I am not threatening. I want to say that a communist-Stalinist will not dare to preach morals to us.

[Communist MK, apparently MK Tubi, shouts: "I will preach morality to you. Let me..." and general shouting drowns the rest of the shout, while the Knesset speaker calls MK Tubi to order for the third time]

Foreign agent as you are: [Speaker Shamir repeats his third call to order to MK Tubi] You will preach morality to us? You sit in the Knesset and speak freely. Can a Jew sit...[shouting increases and Speaker Shamir threatens to expel him from the hall if he says another word] Do you think we do not remember your acts, muftite as you are.

[MK Wilner, RAKAH] You are a fascist...[Speaker Shamir drowns him out calling him to order for the first time]

[Begin] Mr Wilner, you are a slave of Stalin, of Brezhnev, of Malenkov, of Khrushchev, who is like you...a slave of slaves is what you are...

[Wilner] While he has holding negotiations with Mussolini, Hitler's disciple...

[Begin] What do you think this is, the ceremonial session with President Carter?

[Unidentified MK] Mr Speaker, are we forbidden to heckle today?

[Begin] Lowbrow slave of murderous slaves and foreign agents, whom we permit to sit in this house....

[MK Wilner] You are selling Israel to the Americans, you are an American slave... [shouts increase and Knesset speaker tries desperately to impose order]

[Speaker Shamir] MK Charlie Biton, I call you to order for the first time. I am calling you to order for the second time.

[Begin] Fifthly: fifthly....

[Speaker Shamir] I request silence. I request silence. [More shouts from Knesset Hall. Shouts become general and overwhelming. Speaker continuously calls for silence, tries to silence different members of Knesset]

[Begin] MK Shoshana Arbeli, I am also a member of Knesset and you know that I have been sitting in this house for 30 years and I know how to swallow, but there is a limit to arrogance on the part of that side of the house. They will preach morality to us?

[Speaker Shamir] MK Tubi [Tubi shouting, indistinct] I have called you to order three times...just a minute...[Tubi's shouts are indistinct, but furious] Just a minute, MK Tubi, MK Tubi, be silent, be silent. Members of Knesset, Members of Knesset, I have called him to order three times. Silence. I have called MK Tubi to order three times and, in accordance with Article 69, I put this expulsion to the vote. Who is in favor of his expulsion from the hall, raise their hands? Please lower them. Who is against? Tubi, stop shouting. It has been decided to expel you. I request you to leave the hall. I request that he be expelled from the hall. [shouting becomes overwhelming, whistles are blown by Knesset ushers and Knesset ushers try to persuade Tubi to leave but he refuses]

[MK Tubi] ...you conducted in the war against Syria. You said you were preparing to reach Damascus, that is not peace... [shouts drown him out, radio commentator interjects that MK Tubi calls out "you will pay for this" before being expelled from the hall]

[Speaker Shamir] MK Charlie Biton...MK Charlie Biton...I request silence, members of Knesset. I request silence, members of Knesset...send it in a letter..submit a letter...[shouting increases] MK Porush, MK Porush, I asked for silence. I am using Article 62 of the Knesset code, that no member of Knesset has the right to speak without requesting the permission of the Knesset speaker, even during the time he is due to speak from the podium. The members of Knesset have the right to ask questions with the permission of the speaker. I will see to this. [shouting increases again] There are no questions now. I request silence, I request silence and that the prime minister be permitted to continue with his remarks.

[Begin--superimposed over Shamir's calls] Of course I will continue, and how I will continue:

[Shamir continuing] ...I will not permit heckling. No. Impossible to heckle.

[Begin] Certainly. Certainly. I agree. [more indistinct calls from the hall]

[Shamir] MK Tamar [Eshel] you do not have the right to speak. It is not your turn to speak. I ask you not to speak now.

[Begin] MK Tamar made a very respectful interruption. I will reply to it with respect. You know that I know how to reply to heckling. But what they tried to do is to take away my right to speak in this house. They would not behave like that in the Supreme Soviet.

There are no such things in the Supreme Soviet. [shouts continue] Don't be his guardian, don't be a guardian, Me'ir Pa'il.

[Speaker Shamir] Members of Knesset, members of Knesset, I request silence.

[Begin] Another deviation from the Camp David agreement takes the form of the words: full autonomy for the West Bank and the Gaza district [last 10 words in English]....

[Speaker Shamir] Members of Knesset, what are these arguments? I request silence.

[Begin] This is not how it is written in the Camp David agreement. What is written is: full atuonomy to the inhabitants. [last five words in English] And these are two worlds. I can promise the Knesset that we would never have signed the Camp David agreement if these words, which appear in the letter given to the foreign minister, had appeared in it. We agreed to grant autonomy to the Arab inhabitants of Judaea, Samaria and Gaza and this we will do. We never agreed that full autonomy should be given to the territories of Judaea, Samaria and Gaza; to the Arab inhabitants--full autonomy; while the words: to the inhabitants [last three words in English] has been erased from that letter.

In addition to this, another contradiction: At the time, we requested, at Camp David, after the words: self-governing authority [last three words in English] the words: administrative council [last two words in English] be added in brackets. The Egyptian representative claimed that if this was written in brackets, this would mean that everywhere in the document that there is a mention of self-governing authority [last three words in English] it will be understood that this is an administrative council. Then the legal adviser, Dr Baraq, now Judge Baraq, said in the name of the Israeli delegation, that is exactly what we mean. Yes, that is an administrative council. And there is very great importance indeed in this. I will explain the importance of the word. If it is an administrative council, it is autonomy. An administrative council, composed of 9 or 11 or 13 members with administrative posts, must administer the daily affairs of the inhabitants, in which we will not, under any circumstances, intervene. Then it is not entitled to change the agreement and declare, if I may put it like this, suddenly one bright day, what is called a Palestinian state. We will simply not permit this. We will not agree and will not allow such a violation of the Camp David agreement. In contrast to this, if these words are erased, as they have been erased from this letter, then it may also be possible to interpret: self-governing authority [last three words in English] and, in brackets: legislative council [last two words in English] as something completely different, and so we insisted on the return of the words administrative council [last two words in English] because to that, and only to that, we agreed.

Another contradiction: In all the drafts of that letter we wrote: and other related issues [last four words in English] connected with the matter, meaning, of course, Israel's security.

There is an article in the Camp David agreement that says that all measures will be taken to guarantee the security of Israel and its neighbors--quite rightly--for the 5 years and beyond [last two words in English]. So, in the negotiations, we had to put forward the whole problem of external and internal security in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza, with the implementation of autonomy.

Thus, there were seven definite contradictions to the Camp David agreement. I can inform the Knesset that, 2 days after I made this speech to the President of the United States and his colleagues, one of the members of the U.S. delegation told us that the claim had been justified and the President completely accepted it.

We continued with the deliberations in Washington. The talks between the President and myself--when we sat alone in a room--lasted for 5 hours. For another 7 hours the two delegations met and explained why we would not be able, under any circumstances, to accept this list of interpretations to Articles VI/2 and VI/5 and this letter, as these papers were given to our foreign minister at Camp David II.

Sunday of that week arrived. Even before that I had been invited to appear on the ABC program Issues and Answers. Of course I agreed to be interviewed. On Saturday evening I held a 2-hour talk, tete-a-tete, with the President of the United States. There was not...what did MK Bar-Lev say? What time? I will tell you, between 2000 and 2400. Now, are you satisfied? [shouting from Knesset Hall, indistinct] between 2000 and 2400 at night, yes, yes...Avraham, do not help me; I can manage, believe me. The minister of transport...believe me that I can manage with him. He knows that, from his personal experience. There is no problem.

Well, there was no change in the situation. I want to tell of something piquant about that same Sunday's interview. I was asked questions, hard ones. Someone interviewed me who had once directed an entire ABC program devoted to the murderers' organization called the PLO. So you can imagine his attitude toward the State of Israel. He asked me hard questions, but, in our world, and on television, this is accepted and we must accept this. I replied to the best of my ability and understanding. Finally, he asked me: Tell me, Mr Prime Minister, why are you here at all? I was very surprised and answered: I have never heard such a strange question. I will tell you why I am here. You invited me. So he says: Are you speaking to the U.S. nation over the head of the U.S. Government? For heaven's sake, you flooded my office in Jerusalem with cables asking me to appear on this program. You looked for Barbara Walters throughout Europe. You did not find her because she was then in Morocco trying to interview the shah. So you are substituting for her and you are questioning me. I am replying to you and after all that you ask me why I am here?

[Unidentified MK] Is this the session on peace today?

[Begin] What?

[Unidentified MK] Is this the session on peace today, or have we made a mistake?

[Begin] I don't understand. I want to make a very important announcement, to clarify the situation between the United States and the State of Israel. The United States is a completely free country and television can invite whomever it wants. Of course, if he is asked questions, he answers them. And I did not imagine that I would be speaking to the U.S. nation over the head of the U.S. Government, but if I was invited, I would reply. When the secretary of state comes--this is my announcement--to the State of Israel and wants to be interviewed on television and speak against the policy of the Government of Israel, not only will we permit him to do this, I am also certain that our television will do this with special joy. [laughter from the Knesset] There is no doubt of that. The secretary of state will be kind enough to take note--he will certainly be visiting us shortly--he will be able to go on television and condemn the Government of Israel and its policy. How did Shakespeare put it [words indistinct]?

[MK Shulamit Aloni] Sir, you do not know about the revolution that has taken place in television management.

[MK Gad Ya'aqobi] What is the issue on the Knesset agenda today?

[Unidentified MK] MK Ya'aqobi, Menahem Begin brought peace, despite the fact that it hurts you, and that is the issue on the agenda. I know it hurts you a lot, both you and Sarid. [more shouts break out]

[Begin] On the Sunday at 1400 the Israeli delegation was invited to the White House for another meeting with the President and his advisers. Then, really, for the first time, there was a very basic change in the situation, as I have described it up to now. The President opened the meeting, asking if we had discussed the problems seriously. He asked the secretary of state to present us with new proposals. These were the proposals of the President of the United States, as they were told to us by the secretary of state.

As regards Article VI/5, the U.S. delegation proposed to the Israeli delegation that it should be written: It is agreed upon by the sides that there is no provision that this treaty takes precedence over other treaties or agreements. And he continued: The above-mentioned does not detract from the rules of Article VI/5 of the treaty, which says, and he repeated, word for word, the text of Article VI/5 of the peace treaty, which I have already read to the house. Then, on the spot, I proposed an amendment to the proposal, to the secretary of state: If you propose writing that this treary has no precedence over other treaties, also write: and vice versa. He accepted the proposal at once. So, the Israeli-U.S. proposal on this issue was: It is agreed upon by the sides that there is no provision that this treaty takes precedence over other treaties or agreements or that othe treaties or agreements take precedence over this treaty. Afterward came the continuation, as I have already read it. I agreed to this and I recommended that the Cabinet accept the new formulation. I will explain why later.

With regard to Article VI/2, the U.S. proposal, on Sunday at 1400, was as follows: The instructions of Article VI will no longer be in contradiction to the rules of the Framework for Peace in the Middle East which has agreed upon at Camp David, period. Then I suggested an amendment, saying to the secretary of state: What you wrote about Article VI/5, can also apply to Article VI/2, that is: And in the continuation, the abovementioned does not detract from what was stated in Article VI/2 of the treaty, which says, and I repeated, word for word, the text of Article VI/2 as I have read it to the Knesset. The secretary also accepted this proposal. Then we had a complete proposal on Articles VI/2 and VI/5.

Now, what is the significance of this interpretation? It returns the contents of Article VI/2 and 5, to its full significance and honor and, some day, implementation. There is no longer any doubt of this. So, I was able to confidently recommend that the Cabinet accept this formulation, and the Cabinet approved it.

Against this background, I must say that after the U.S. President's visit to Cairo, two suggestions were made regarding these two articles which were accepted by both the U.S. and Israeli delegation: Instead of: Does not detract--in English, does not derogate, is not inconsistent [last six words in English], and, with regard to Article VI/2, a sentence was added after the words: agreed upon at Camp David, according to which a comprehensive settlement and so on is demanded, the well-known phrases: comprehensive peace settlement [last three words in English] in the Middle East and so on. When we read the proposal for amendments at the meeting between the U.S. and Israeli delegations, we said that we would not be able to accept them. With regard to Article VI/5: Is not inconsistent [last three words in English] appears as though we had returned to the previous interpretation. That is, the first part is the determining one and by this the second part is cancelled, that is, Article VI/5. We will not be able to accept this. We were told: but it is hard for As-Sadat to accept the words: does not derogate. [last three words in English] This is so typical, ladies and gentlemen. For several months, both abroad and at home, we were told that we were dealing with words, and playing with legal definitions. Because of this I asked the President of the United States: Why can As-Sadat say that this one word is not acceptable to him. It is only a word. You agreed to it, I agreed. The secretary proposed it. I gave it my approval. There is full agreement between us, between the United States and the State of Israel. Only As-Sadat says that the word does not please him, and you already propose that we cover it up with words which completely cancel the one word--and how!

So we did not accept that new U.S. proposal, which was of course, approved by the Egyptians. We looked for a way out. We wanted a way out. I think we found it. Correct, if it is possible to find an alternate word, a synonym in English, which does not change the contents, we will rack our brains to find such words. In order to reach an agreement we want with all our hearts, in order to bring peace, which we want with all our souls, all of us made an intellectual effort and finally we found the right word. Instead of: Does not derogate, [last three words in English] we wrote it is not to be construed--[last six words in English] at the suggestion of the legal adviser, Professor Zamir--as contravening Article VI/5, which reads as follows [last eight words in English] and again we repeated the same formulation.

This is a formulation which we could certainly accept without any doubts. I can again say, in accordance with this formulation, Article VI/2, and Article VI/5 have been restored to their full significance in the peace treaty.

In contrast, we insisted on the erasure of the addition on the comprehensive peace settlement [last three words in English] . The U.S. delegation told us that it would be very difficult to persuade President As-Sadat to agree to the erasure. We told them--try. After all, this is why you came to the Middle East, to persuade. So try to persuade. I can inform the Knesset that in the telephone conversation between Carter in Cairo and myself, the U.S. President told me that President As-Sadat accepted this erasure. Therefore, these two articles, as I read them, are now agreed on by Israel, Egypt and the United States, and do not in any way mar their contents and significance within the peace treaty.

I now turn to the document called the joint letter. In the wake of the talk we had in Washington the U.S. President brought from Cairo a new version of the letter and took our arguments into consideration. I will read the version as it was brought here from Cairo: This letter confirms an agreement between the Israeli and Egyptian Governments as follows--the Israeli and Egyptian Governments state that they agreed at Camp David to the two accompanying documents carrying the names: Framework for Peace in the Middle East and Framework for a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel. They also mention that they signed them in the White House on 17 September 1978. For the sake of achieving a comprehensive peace agreement according to the framework mentioned above, Israel and Egypt, which sign this letter, upon the signing of the peace treaty, will approach the implementation of those instructions referring to establishing the self-governing authority together with full autonomy to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They agreed to open new negotiations--pardon, I must check the document again!!!

[Uri Avneri--interjection] If I am not mistaken, it is the English version which you are reading here.

[Begin] They agreed to open negotiations within a month after exchanging the documents of ratification of the peace treaty according to the Framework for Peace in the Middle East. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is invited to the negotiations. The Egyptian and Jordanian delegations may consist of Arabs from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or Arabs from Eretz Yisra'el or others as mutually agreed on.

[Uri Avneri--interjecting] Mr Prime Minister, does it not say Palestinian Arabs? [last two words in English]

[Begin] No, it says Palestinians. [word in English] We exchange letters with the U.S. President and even stated in these letters that anywhere Palestinians is written, the State of Israel says Palestinian Arabs [last two words in English] or, in a Hebrew translation--the Arabs of Eretz Yisra'el.

[Avneri] Mr Prime Minister, does this change their nature? You said on television that the English version is the decisive one. The Prime Minister has more than once said that the English version is the decisive one.

[Begin] The letters are also binding. What do you mean--what are they written for? I have already made the announcement and my announcement stands. But the letter between the U.S. President and me is significant--isn't it? However, I ask the Knesset's pardon. I made a mistake in choosing the second document--it is identical to the first--therefore I stopped reading it. I do not have the other document with me...

[Pa'il--interjecting] Perhaps the prime minister will listen to my advice, will give fewer details and will define the basis of the problem. We are after all, talking of a peace agreement in principle not of details. We are reading the details. We read English and Hebrew well. We have the versions of the agreement here.

[Begin] MK Pa'il, can you listen to my answer or are you in a trance [word in English]. I have heard you and now will you be kind enough to listen to my answer? I thank you very much for your advice. From the legal aspect I have better advisers than you, believe me. I myself studied law. You were an instructor in our army and learned about Napoleon. He said: The details are very important, listen to the details. [following indistinct interjection of Pa'il] Sir, I am addressing the Knesset and you as well. Be kind enough to listen.

I ask your pardon for this failure [to bring the other document]. However, I can inform the Knesset members that the other document contains all the amendments I proposed in Washington to the U.S. President and secretary of state. For example, the word inhabitants [word in English] and so on were returned to the text. However, very grave matters were left in this version. The target date has remained, a year for the establishment of autonomy; liaison officers in Gaza were retained, as was the provision that autonomy would first be established in Gaza. It is clear that we also objected to these deviations from the Camp David agreements. As for the Egyptian liaison officers--I have already explained. After all the discussions we agreed to a different version of the letter. It is in front of me. It is important and I will read it since this letter was agreed to by Egypt and is now agreed on by all three delegations. This letter confirms that Egypt and Israel have agreed as follows: The Israeli and Egyptian Governments agreed at Camp David to the attached letters carrying the names: Framework to Peace in the Middle East Agreed on at Camp David, and A Framework for a Peace Treaty Between Israel and Egypt. They signed them in the White House on 17 September 1978. In order to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement according to the above-mentioned framework Israel and Egypt will approach the implementation of those principles pertaining to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They agreed to open--listen to the end, Mr Avneri, I have a surprise for you; you know the famous saying about whom one d es not show half the task and this is not even a quarter of the task...

[Me'ir Pa'il--interjecting] We have read the document. We have it. We know it. Why do we have to have it read again?

[Begin] Why are you keeping me from finishing my job? I think this is necessary. What do you want--to dictate things to me?

To achieve a comprehensive peace settlement according to the above-mentioned frameworks, Egypt and Israel will approach the implementation of those principles pertaining to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They agreed to open negotiations within a month after exchanging the documents of ratification of the peace treaty. According to the Framework for Peace in the Middle East, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is invited to join the negotiations. The delegations of Israel and Egypt can include Eretz Yisra'eli Arabs from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or other Eretz Yisra'eli Arabs as will be agreed on mutually. The objective of the negotiations will be to agree, before the elections, on the ways of establishing the elected authority of self-administration--in parentheses: the administrat've council [last two words in English]--of defining its powers and responsibilities and to agree on other subjects involved in this. In case Jordan decides not to take part in the negotiations, Egypt and Israel will hold the negotiations. The two governments agree to negotiate continuously and in good faith in order to end the negotiations as soon as possible. They also mention that the objective of the negotiations is the establishment of the authority of self-administration in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to give full autonomy to the inhabitants [last word repeated in English], as we demanded.

Israel and Egypt set the goal of completing the negotiations within a year so that the elections can be held as soon as possible after an agreement is reached between the parties. Explanation: There is not yet a target date for the establishment of autonomy. The negotiations should go on for a year. The negotiations will begin a month after exchanging the ratification documents and they should last a year. The elections for the administrative council should be held as expeditiously as possible [last four words in English],namely, as soon as possible. As we demanded, there is not yet a target date for the establishment of autonomy. The authority of self-administration mentioned in the Framework for Peace in the Middle East will be established and inaugurated within a month after it is elected. That is when the transitional 5-year period will begin, with autonomy then existing in both Judaea, Samaria and Gaza. Then the term of 5 years will begin. The Israeli military authorities and civilian administration will withdraw and be replaced by the authority of self-administration as provided in the Framework for Peace in the Middle East. There will be a withdrawal of the Israeli Armed Forces then and a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces in definite security areas. This letter also confirms our request that the United States fully participate in all phases of the negotiations. Signed by Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat and Menahem Begin.

Now there is a further comment: In every paragraph where the expression West Bank appears, it is understood and will be understood by the Israeli Government as Judaea and Samaria. This is the official document to which all three delegations agreed: the Israeli, U.S. and Egyptian. This is the binding document.

[Uri Avneri] Allow me, Mr Prime Minister.

[Begin] Yes, Mr Avneri.

[Avneri] I find here a disparity between the English version and Hebrew translation...

[Begin--interrupting] The Knesset votes on only one version, which is the version in Israel's tongue which is...

[Avneri] But the English version is the decisive one...

[Begin] Mr Avneri, allow me to answer you, for heavens' sake...

[Mk Shelomo Hillel] Mr Prime Minister, what is the binding version you are signing?

[Begin] I will first answer Uri Avneri, then Mr Hillel. I cannot answer both at the same time. Wait your turn. The Knesset has before it both the English and Hebrew versions. However, I will say simple things that will be accepted by all Knesset members: We are voting on the Hebrew version while you can also see the English version and compare the two versions. Now, what does Mk Hillel want?

[Mk Hillel] I asked what is the binding version that the prime minister intends to sign? What is the binding version?

[Begin] You have asked and I will answer you. Just do not behave like Me'ir Pa'il who got into a trance [word in English] and cannot stop. Do not get into a trance.

Well, I have said: There will be three versions--Hebrew, Arabic and English. All the parties agreed that if there is a problem of understanding words, that is of interpretation, the English version is the decisive one. This is what was agreed on.

Now, I am switching to another issue. Did I give you a clear answer Mr Hillel? [several indistinct interjections]

[Speaker] Knesset members I demand silence. We have no time.

[Begin] Now I am switching to a totally different issue. We have solved the problem of Articles VI/2 and VI/5 and the problem of the joint letter to our satisfaction, the government has approved this, and the Knesset is asked to approve the peace treaty with all its annexes, including the final accompanying letter as I read it to you.

There was a problem on the exchange of ambassadors. Previously President as-Sadat, in response to an appeal from the U.S. President, agreed that 1 month after our withdrawal to the Al-'Arish-Ra's Muhammad line resident ambassadors would be exchanged between Israel and Egypt. One of the members of the Egyptian delegation at the first Camp David got wise and in one of the talks he said: Well, we can appoint our ambassador to Cyprus to be ambassador in Israel. Very clever. This caused us to demand that ambassador resident [last two words in English] be written.

The first clause of the third annex says that upon the completion of the interim withdrawal, that is to say to the Al-'Arish... Mr Shahal, is it not true that you dislike being interrupted. Dear friends, I am sure that you have no respect for someone who turns his back to you when you are speaking from this platform. So please remember the rule of Hillel the elder. Mr Shahal, I have no complaints.

I asked you allow me to speak as I should, with respect, to the faces of the Knesset members, including my honorable opponents, as should be the case in a democratic parliament.

Well, in the first clause of that third annex it is written: [begin English] Upon completion of the interim withdrawal, Egypt and Israel will exchange resident ambassadors. [end English] This is what we agreed. On the other hand, the agreement between the U.S. President and the Egyptian president added a month to the 9 months required to complete the withdrawal of our forces to the Al-'Arish-Ra's Muhammad line. And we lived with this for several months. Then one day President as-Sadat announced that he was withdrawing his agreement to this and explained that he was promised in the Blair House negotiations that during the 9 months there would be places from which we would withdraw before the end of the 9 months--such as Al-'Arish, and other places. The government decided to leave this possibility open but it also decided that it was not prepared to commit itself to the dates in advance. President as-Sadat said that for this reason--which we never knew about--that is, that there is a connection between the exchange of ambassadors and the stages of the withdrawal during the 9 months, he will not send an ambassador to Israel 10 months after the exchange of the ratification documents and he will not accept an Israeli ambassador.

I would like to explain to the Knesset that this is a very serious problem. Why is it serious? It has the symbolism and the expression of normalization of relations. In the 19th century there were authorized representatives of countries which were not necessarily ambassadors. But this is not the case today. The tiniest country sends an ambassador and receives one. When the time came and the United States normalized its relations with the PRC, the two countries decided to exchange ambassadors. Until then, in the last 2 years, there were diplomatic representatives of the PRC in the United States and of the United States in the PRC. However, the relations were not considered normal. When were they declared such? When the two countries decided to exchange ambassadors. That is why the exchange of ambassadors as had been agreed upon--and one of those who agreed to this was the President of the United States--was most significant to us. We are beginning the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel. An Israeli ambassador will sit in Egypt and an Egyptian ambassador in Israel. This is what the argument was about. We solved the problem in Jerusalem. How? The Cabinet decided that it was prepared to accept the possibility, after the defense minister presents the proposals to the Cabinet and it accepts them, of stages of withdrawal during the 9 months. After we agreed, I received this letter from the President of the United States yesterday and acknowledged receipt:

Dear Mr Prime Minister, we have received a letter from President as-Sadat saying that within 1 month after Israel completes its withdrawal to the interim line in the Sinai, as required by the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, Egypt will send a resident ambassador to Israel and will receive a resident ambassador from Israel. I would appreciate it if you could confirm that this will be acceptable to the Government of Israel. Sincerely, Jimmy Carter.

I acknowledged receipt of this letter yesterday, and thus the problem of the exchange of ambassadors has been concluded.

I am now switching to a very serious matter. That is the oil issue. Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, Knesset members: Israel's annual consumption is between 8 and 9 million tons of oil. This is a vital problem for us. Not only so that the citizens of Israel can drive cars, so that the wheels of our industry--and we are an industrialized country--can turn and that our workers can work, but this is essential for the existence of our defense system. A word to the wise. There is no need to add any other detail.

Now I would like to inform the Knesset that the Cabinet was cautious in dealing with this important problem. Even before the revolution--or the coup--in Iran, we heard two announcements from the shah which worried us, although he was still in full control of Iran. The shah publicly stated: If, one day, the UN Security Council or the United States or the superpowers decide on an oil boycott of Israel, Iran will join that boycott. I called our good energy minister's attention to these two announcements by the shah and told him: My friend, don't wait, go look for alternative sources of oil without delay, and he went, and sought, and found. That is why we, as you have seen, ladies and gentlemen, after Iran stopped the supplies of oil--not even one drop of oil, as a result of the Khomeyni revolution, which parts of the world regard as a progressive revolution, woe to the ears that hear such words--after that Khomeyni revolution, we did not appeal to the United States. We did not ask that it fulfill its commitment, given to my predecessor MK Rabin in 1975, after we left Abu Rudays--a very important commitment to supply all of Israel's oil requirements for 5 full years--we did not appeal. We will do everything possible to avoid having to appeal and let us hope we shall also succeed. However, the matter is most important.

At the end of the 9 months, we are going to leave the oil fields which we have drilled and toiled over on the Sinai coast and in the Sinai. This is the reason we asked that Egypt give us a commitment that it will sell to us at world market prices--we did not ask for any favors, but a certain quantity of oil, 2.5 million tons. Today we produce 1.6 million tons annually from the oil wells. In 3 to 6 months we can, without any difficulty, reach the level of 2.5 million tons. This is the quantity we currently need to fill the shortage. This was our request: a commitment to sell to us at world market prices 2.5 million tons. As you well known, Egypt has no need for oil--today it even exports oil--so that there was no harm to Egypt in this, or in its status or economic needs. The Egyptians did not accept our proposal. Therefore, we said that, since this question is essential, it must be solved before we were prepared either to bring the peace treaty to the Knesset for approval or to sign it. After deliberations and on the initiative of a group of Cabinet members, our foreign minister met on Monday evening with the secretary of state and raised an idea--one cannot say that he brought a proposal to him, because the Cabinet had not yet decided on it, but he had full authority to raise this idea--namely, that the Egyptians make a commitment to sell us oil at world market prices, without discrimination, just like all other nations; whereas the United States guarantees that, for 20 years, if the need should arise, it would supply our entire annual requirement. The secretary of state said that 20 years was too long. The United States at first proposed 10 years, but as is the usual practice in such cases, one compromises, and 15 years were agreed upon.

This is what the United States has now committed itself to, namely: Egypt will give us a letter stating that it will sell us oil at world market prices and without discrimination. The quantity will not be mentioned in that letter from the Egyptian Government. On the other hand, the United States will give us a letter stating that if we should run short of oil, it will be prepared, for 15 years, to supply us the entire requirement--as it stands today--between 8 and 9 million tons of oil.

[MK Tamar Eshel] Is the U.S. letter already in our hands?

[Begin] Not yet, but it soon will be. I assure you, dear Mrs Eshel, that we will sign the peace treaty after that letter is in our possession, and not before. We have not received the Egyptian letter yet, and we are awaiting it.

[MK Uri Avneri] Mr Prime Minister, are the words: will entertain bids made by Israel--is this a commitment to sell or a commitment to consider?

[Begin] Egypt's commitment will be to sell us oil like anyone who wishes to buy oil in Egypt: without discrimination. This is the commitment. As any other bidder [last four words in English] I shall conceal nothing from the Knesset. I will explain everything just as we agreed on it.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is still not the end of this affair. There is another proposal by the energy minister, a very important one, securing 2.5 million tons of oil each year. The Knesset members will pardon me if I do not give details of this proposal since it is still being negotiated. However, the proposal is important, and it is not connected with the Egyptian Government. This refers to clarifying the situation so that we will be assured of receiving 2.5 million tons of oil annually from these sources. But this special proposal, as I said before, is still under negotiation. And thus, to the best of our knowledge, the oil issue has been solved.

I would like to tell the Knesset members that we will do everything possible to avoid having to go to America to ask it to fulfill its 1975 commitment or the 15-year commitment it will give in the next few days. The commitment is a very serious one, there is no doubt about it. The United States of America promises in writing before the whole world to do something--who would be so cynical as to think that such a commitment would be violated? No.

The problem is entirely different: The United States is currently suffering an energy crisis. It is a fact that many large airlines have already stopped dozens of flights due to the energy shortage. The White House has lowered the thermostat to set an example to the rest of the country, and there will be further limitations soon.

I will tell you, for 9 months of the year there is no need to lower any temperatures here at home: Thank God we have the sun here in our tiny country. For 3 months sometimes this is necessary, but we will be able to manage. However, I assure you that if it is necessary to implement such a limitation, we will not hesitate to enforce it. I am sure the citizens will understand this because it concerns our lives. Why should one waste energy? One must use it without waste.

I noticed, ladies and gentlemen, that about 10 days ago the President of the United States held a news conference. One correspondent asked him the following: Mr President, there is an energy crisis in the United States, yet you will give oil to Israel? The President replied respectfully, and I would like to express full appreciation for this reply. This is what he said: First, we will abide by our commitment. Second, the entire annual Israeli consumption is merely 1 percent of our own--that is, of the United States. This is an honorable, respectable reply, which bestows honor on the one who utters it. But neither must one forget the question. There may be people in the United States who, when there are difficulties, will say: We have turned down the thermostat at home; we cannot go for an outing on Sunday; yet we are giving oil to Israel? There may be still another version which will be used. We do not want it. This is an important psychological matter. Therefore, we want to be sure to do everything possible to insure that we receive the oil from other sources. The U.S. guarantee is firm, but let us not need it. We shall make these efforts. However, it is true that if there is no other alternative, we shall appeal to the one who made a commitment, and I have no doubt that it will fulfill its commitment.

Mr Speaker, the Egyptian prime minister, Dr Khalil--an amiable man, as I have already said--made a speech several days ago, in which he said: A Palestinian state will be established in Gaza and in the West Bank. Israel will withdraw to the 1967 borders. The eastern part--as he put it, the Arab part--of Jerusalem will not be given to Israel. After he made these three declarations, Dr Khalil was kind enough to say that now, on the verge of signing it, it is preferable that all the parties refrain from making political declarations in public to prevent making relations worse. Since he made these three declarations, as prime minister I have no choice but to respond to them in unequivocal, unambiguous language to the people of Israel, to the people of Egypt, of Saudi Arabia--who yesterday broadcast an announcement by Prince Fahd--to the United States and to all the nations of the world. I am voicing these words as I know the Knesset members' views to be, not only on behalf of this part of the house [the Coalition side of the Knesset benches], but also on behalf of those members sitting across the aisle from me andmost of the members sitting to the right of me [the opposition side]--that is, on behalf of the vast majority of the Knesset, the representatives of the people...

[MK Uri Avneri] A majority has already turned into a minority and the minority has turned into the majority.

[Begin] All right. But for this you will have to wait a long, long time, Mr Avneri.

[Averni] It will happen faster than you think, Mr Prime Minister. Just as you did not want peace with Egypt and yet now you are prepared for it, so you will also agree to peace with the Palestinians--which you do not accept today.

[Speaker Shamir] MK Averni, you are on the list of speakers. Then you can say what you want.

[Begin] I can understand you. It has been some years since you have spoken in the Knesset. There is a certain urge to speak, I understand. But contain yourself. Your turn will come. You have even asked that the speakers appear in alphabetical order so that you could be the first. [general laughter]

[Unidentified Knesset member] Thank goodness this recommendation was not accepted.

[Begin] Well, to the first declaration made by Egyptian Prime Minister Dr Khalil, that Israel will return to the June 4, 1967 lines: Dr Khalil, I inform you that Israel will never return to the borders of 4 June 1967.

[MK Wilner] That means that you do not want peace.

[Begin] Even if Mr Wilner wants it, Israel will never return to the June 4, 1967 lines. Secondly, do not interrupt me, I am now conversing with Dr Khalil, allow me to finish if you please.

Secondly, Dr Khalil said that the eastern part of Jerusalem will be severed from the state. Dear and honorable Dr Khalil, note this: Jerusalem the united, the one and only, is the eternal capital of Israel. It will never be divided, and this is how it will remain for generations upon generations.

[Wilner] That means, you do not want peace.

[Begin] I am talking about Jerusalem, and he is interrupting me. Mr Wilner, what do you know about Jerusalem? I have heard your speech at the Supreme Soviet. Do you think I do not know what you have to say on Jerusalem? Now I am talking to Dr Khalil, Mr Wilner, do not interrupt me.

[Wilner] Mr Prime Minister, Mr Prime Minister, if you want to continue with the conquest and annihilate the Palestinian people, then you want war, not peace!

[Begin] Nonsense is what you have just said, evil words. There are no grounds to what you have said.

[Speaker Shamir] I ask you, Knesset members, enough.

[Begin] Now I would like to make the third declaration in reply to Dr Khalil. Dr Khalil, a state called Palestine will never be established in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza.

[Wilner] That means, you want war and not peace.

[Speaker Shamir] MK Wilner, do you want to be expelled? I ask you to shut up. You do not have the right to speak.

[Wilner] You only want conquest.

[Speaker Shamir] You will speak later, you are on the list of speakers. There is no problem, everyone will speak when his turn comes, and when he has the right to speak.

[Begin] Since I was interrupted, I will only repeat this sentence, Mr Speaker, for the same of the clarity of the minutes. A Palestinian state will never be established in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza. Now one may ask: How do you know? This is my answer: by consent of the vast majority in this house. We will not agree to this, we will not allow this and we will not permit it. Period.

[MK Me'ir Pa'il] The treaty you are signing leads directly to this.

[Begin] No, autonomy will not lead to a Palestinian state. No.

[Wilner] A Palestinian state is of vital interest. Only if a Palestinian state is established alongside Israel will there be peace.

[Begin] There will be autonomy, but not a Palestinian state. I would like to tell you, MK Almoslino, I would like to tell you that I am already a very old Jew. You are much younger than me. For many years after I am gone you will see that there is autonomy but not a Palestinian state, and so will your sons and your grandchildren, even in the next generation or in the coming generations.

[Wilner] Nonsense.

[Begin] This is what I am telling you.

[MK Me'ir Pa'il] If you are an old politician, hear something from a young Knesset member: A great politician never says never. Never, lest he should be disappointed and disillusioned.

[Begin] Who told you that I am a great politician? Who told you that? You are a great politician, so you say this.

[MK Uri Avneri] We shall all witness a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

[Begin] These words Me'ir, and you, too, Uri, both of you listen to me. The representatives of Shelli listen to me because the problem is serious and I have a literary pearl for you. You will be interested in it.

These words were written by Ibsen in his play: The Enemy of the People. In English it sounds very nice: In Politics never say never [previous five words in English]. However, now I would like to tell you...

[Me'ir Pa'il] I suggest that in this case you listen to these sayings.

[Begin] Listen, I want to tell you now that I accept what Ibsen said. Yes, it is true: In politics never say never [previous five words in English] What I said does not pertain to any politics. It is a matter that concerns our lives, our existence. We want to show fairness, mutual respect to our Arab neighbors in Eretz Yisra'el. A Palestinian state is dangerous to the very existence of the country for which we have shed our blood and endangered our lives. We must leave it to our sons after us. There is no force in the world that will make us agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza and endanger our children in Tel Aviv, murder our wives in Petah Tiqva.

[Wilner] On the contrary, because there is no Palestinian state there is bloodshed.

[Begin] This is not politics [last word in English]. This refers...

[Wilner] If there is a Palestinian state, peace will be secure.

[Unidentified Knesset member] Why was it not established before 1967?

[Begin] This refers to our very existence. Do you think we will permit games with slogans when we are talking about the lives of our children? Do we not have experience? When they stood here, near Jerusalem, there was a family in Romema [a northern Jerusalem district] with three small children, who were almost murdered in their cribs. I saw the ruins of that house with my own eyes. I will not say who these grandchildren are. Do you want this to be the situation? This is what would happen if an 'Arafat-like country were established in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza. It would also be a Soviet base. Within a few days Soviet generals and aides would be stationed in Bethlehem. Do we need this? Does Wilner want this? He will not witness this.

[Wilner] And if there is a pro-U.S. Palestinian state, would you agree to this?

[Begin] You have already asked this stupid question.

[Wilner] Why? The answer is stupid, the question is proper.

[Speaker Shamir] Mk Wilner, you will speak today, you do not have permission to speak now.

[Wilner] But a question?

[Shamir] No questions.

[Begin] I shall provide an answer. No.

[Unidentified Knesset member] Now are you satisfied?

[Begin] Write Brezhnev a letter, immediately [words indistinct].

[Wilner] You agree to a pro-U.S. Palestinian state?

[Begin] I already said: No. I said no, not Soviet or American, not French or British.

[Wilner] I accept any independent country...

[Indistinct interjections]

[Speaker Shamir] Mk Abramowitz, I would ask you not to interrupt the prime minister.

[Begin] I have a request for the two neighbors of MK Wilner: Try to soothe him and calm him down. You are so close to him. I know you are far away from him [ideologically].

[MK Avneri] Only close to him physically.

[Begin] You are sitting next to him. Help me a little. I am finally nearing the end.

[Avneri] Mr Prime Minister.

[Begin] Yes, what else? What else, Uri Avneri?

[Avneri] Mr Prime Minister, this issue, which conerns our lives, is too serious to be solved with a few slogans.

Perhaps the Knesset would, for once, hold a rational discussion on this issue.

[Begin] Submit a motion for the agenda. I would be in favor of such a discussion.

[Avneri] If your colleagues support this...

[Begin] Uri, if you submit a motion to discuss the problem of a Palestinian state, I will come to the podium and recommend that the Knesset hold a full debate on this question. At the conclusion of the debate, you will find out how very few members of this house support this abominable, dangerous idea--the extent of its danger cannot even be measured. But we have already agreed, so you have nothing to interrupt about.

[Avneri] Mr Prime Minister, I remember when I was the only one in this house who was prepared to return the Sinai in exchange for peace, the only one. There are others who remember this.

[Speaker Shamir] MK Avneri, there is a limit. Enough.

[MK Aberli-Almoslino] Mr Prime Minister, with your permission, I would like to ask a question.

[Begin] Not now, maybe later. Let me continue for one more paragraph. It is very important, you will be happy to hear what I intend to say. I intend to speak about settlement in Eretz Yisra'el. Is it not true that you will let me say something about this issue? But first, still, allow me to talk about the settlement.

[Pa'il] On condition that the prime minister says that he is stopping the settlement activity.

[Begin] Thank you very much for your advice. I beg your pardon. Well, Mr Speaker, the Jewish people have the full right to settle in Eretz Yisra'el. This right has been fulfilled and will be fulfilled. I am only sorry that there are people among us who have misled the public for 1 year, denying what has been done in the last year and a half in this area. However, let them remember what is written in the Torah. Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. They must remember this verse.

I would only like to say that these days the Supreme Court, sitting in its capacity as the high court of justice, has decided--in an extended composition of five justices--that the civilian settlement is part of Israel's defense system. This is a court decision in principle, a precedent. If anyone should ever tell me that the Jewish settlement activity in Eretz Yisra'el is illegal, this is how I will reply: There are judges in Israel.

[Me'ir Pa'il] I say in the Knesset that this court decision is political.

[Unidentified Knesset member] Don't hurl stones at the high court, MK Pa'il, this is not done.

[Pa'il] I am not hurling stones [words indistinct]

[Speaker Shamir] I ask for quiet. Please stop these arguments.

[Begin, responding to MK Shulamit Alloni] Shulamit, Shulamit, how many times have you called for honoring court rulings, and now you say we are not to honor court rulings? This is a ruling of the High Court of Justice consisting of five justices. This cannot be questioned. This is the law in Israel.

[Alloni] There should be a special debate.

[Begin] No. In a special composition there is no room for appeal.

[Alloni] Sir, we had political judgments, even when an Arab was not permitted to reside in the Jewish quarter [of Jerusalem]. One has the right to question our judges.

[Begin] All right, but with all due respect, could I have mentioned the ruling of the High Court of Justice?

[MK Yehuda Ben-Me'ir] Anyone who casts doubt on the intentions of the court has committed a criminal offense. If you did not have immunity, you would be standing trial.

[Pa'il] I say for the third time that this court ruling is political and is not justice.

[Ben-Me'ir] You are committing the offense of contempt of court. Do you know? You are hiding behind the immunity.

[Alloni] I am not hiding. This is what immunity is for.

[Begin] Mr Speaker, I would like to say that in this argument, a few minutes ago, a very serious thing happened: A Knesset member, taking advantage of his immunity, allowed himself to say that the court has made a political decision. This is a most serious blow to the court of Israel. The court is totally independent in the State of Israel and anyone who says this hurts the very basis of democracy in Israel.

[Avneri] You are wrong.

[Begin] Mr Speaker, will you please remark--both in writing and verbally--that a Knesset member abused his immunity in offending the courts in Israel. We must all honor the Israeli court.

[Avneri] It is fair criticism.

[Begin] If this court had taken a contrary ruling, the Cabinet would have carried it out.

[Me'ir Pa'il] We have heard about you with the fencing off movement. And I would like to announce that this MK is Me'ir Pa'il.

[Speaker Shamir] Knesset members, I would ask you to stop this argument.

[Begin] Certainly in this house one can also abuse the language, I know this. There is immunity. However, it is a shame that a Knesset member uses his immunity in order to offend the Israeli court, its honor and status. The judges...

[Alloni] That is what immunity is for.

[Ben-Me'ir] You are using your immunity to violate the law.

This is a violation of the law, and you are doing this here in the Knesset.

[Pa'il] You are accusing the court of political calculations.

[Begin] The judges in Israel are just.

[Ben-Me'ir] Mr Speaker, I shall ask the Knesset committee to discuss this case, in which the law was violated here at the Knesset plenum.

[Avneri] The religious members of the Knesset have criticized the court on the Shelli affair...

[Alloni] I don't understand. In the State of Israel the price of eggs is a political issue: What are you shouting about?

[Speaker Shamir] MK Alloni, please be quiet. I would ask you not to interrupt.

[Begin] Mr Speaker, ladies and gentlement, Knesset members: When, with the approval of the Knesset, providing that it gives its approval, we are able to sign the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel--hopefully next week--our security problems will not have been solved, MK Avraham Sharir and deputy finance minister [Yehezqel Flomin]. Our problems have not yet been solved. Israel's security will still be the heart of our concern. After signing the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel we will have a northeastern front. And I shall explain what it means: [Arrayed against us are] 8 armored divisions; 6 mechanized divisions; 15 independent brigades; 5,290 tanks; 3,320 cannons; 800 fighter aircraft and bombers; 113 batteries; 9 SCUD missile launchers; 14 missile boats; 2 frigates; and more. And the list is incomplete. The front today will be based on Syria, Jordan and on Lebanon--partly conquered by Syria--and on Iraq, and perhaps also on Saudi Arabia. The Knesset members should know that Iraq has purchased, mainly from the FRG, 1,000 tank carriers. In other words, in 48 hours 4 armored divisions with their tanks can cross the desert and reach the Golan Heights or another Israeli front. Such a situation has never existed before. Saudi Arabia, in a few years, will have F-16's, and Jordan has a good army--one must admit the truth. Syria has more tanks than Egypt: 2,800. The Egyptians have approxmately 2,200 to 2,400 tanks. So, this will be our northeastern front.

Yes, we will not be afraid. If we are attacked, we will carry out a counterattack, and the God of Israel will aid us, and we will defeat our enemies and maintain our freedom and independence. Yet the danger is very serious. The Knesset should know that this does not depend on us. We want to sign a peace treaty with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. They are not prepared to come to the negotiating table. I will not tire of calling for these three countries to participate in the peace process.

I think one can say that we have had enough of all the wars in the Middle East. What do they gain the Arabs? Do they annihilate the State of Israel--for this is the goal of such a war? Can they ever dream of annihilating the State of Israel? They spill the blood of their sons by the thousands, and they also spill the blood of our sons. Their sons' blood is the blood of men, and therefore I respect and admire it. The blood of our sons is more dear to us than anything else and all those wars were in vain. Never will they achieve their goal. Why, then, conduct futile wars? Why not make peace?

But I know that even this call, for the time being, will be like the call of a man in the desert, and they will not come. But the time will come when we will conduct negotiations and sign peace with them as well. However, I cannot say that this will happen in the foreseeable future. This is a Baghdad front. This front has convened in the city which is the capital of Mesopotamia [Begin uses the biblical term of Aram Naharayim], where a distinct decision has been made that Israel must disppear from the map. This is a front of hate....

[Avneri] This is not true, Mr Prime Minister.

[Begin] ...of animosity.

[Avneri] This is not true. The Baghdad resolutions speak about peace with Israel, clearly.

[Begin] And you are telling me what is written there?

[Avneri] We have both read: a just peace in the Middle East with Israel.

[Begin] Uri Avneri, it is beyond even your dignity to defend the Baghdad convention; after all, you are one of Israel's former soldiers. How could you defend the Baghdad conference?

[Avneri] I have read the formulation of the agreement.

[Begin] This is a conference of hate, animosity, hostility and it even threatens the life of President as-Sadat and the State of Israel; it is collaborating with the PLO [previous term in English] with the murderers. That very 'Arafat has already threatened the life of As-Sadat, and you have been the friend of As-Sadat since you were young. Aren't you taking this into account?

[Avneri] Mr Prime Minister, one must quote correctly: the Baghdad decisions talk about a just and lasting peace.

[Speaker Shamir] MK Avneri, enough.

[Begin] I have read and I know what I read, my friend, and that is why I would like to say that these dangers to the State of Israel have not yet passed. And we will still not attain peace and quiet, and we will have to be on guard, and it is important that the free world know and hear what is referred to and that it strengthen the State of Israel. This is what I would say, and I will not pay attention to any noisiness from the Knesset benches--tua res agitur--it is the business of the free world to strengthen the State of Israel, because it is an inseparable part of it. This is a democratic country and that is why it is a stable country; no bullet will solve any problem here and neither would any violent demonstration change the order of the world or a government. The stability is inherent in our democratic regime and that is why the free world has here a true ally, a stable and serious one whose powers, too, cannot be dismissed in the Middle East. Therefore, we will remember both the danger and the steps that must be taken in order to stand at the gate and prevent war. We do not want to win it; we do not want it to break out at all. And this is how we shall act.

Mr Speaker, at the conclusion of my words, I would like to explain what the Cabinet has decided, what it wants to have approved: Today with the consent of the Cabinet, I am calling on the Knesset to approve the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt together with its appendixes, including the accompanying letter. No more.

There is a very serious problem: the autonomy arrangements. We shall have to conduct negotiations on this problem 1 month after the exchange of the ratification documents of the peace treaty. The Cabinet has decided to elect a committee--you have read the names of its members--after the signing of the peace treaty. This committee, which already has three proposals, will also receive additional proposals, will discuss them and reach decisions. Then, with these decisions, after the entire Cabinet approves them, it will go to those who will conduct the negotiations with us.

[MK Shlomo Hillel] Mr Prime Minister, what have you promised the MAFDAL?

[Begin] You know what, Hillel, since you are asking such a nice, elegant and intelligent question, may I also give you an intelligent answer? One day I shall tell you in your ear.

[Pa'il] Perhaps this is the declaration that the prime minister made to Khalil?

[Begin] Today we are discussing the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, and not a peace treaty between the Likud and the MAFDAL.

[MK Shulamit Alloni] Mr Prime Minister.

[Begin] Yes, ma'am.

[Alloni] Perhaps you could devote some words to the vision of peace, perhaps you could encourage the people a bit about the nature of peace?

[Begin] I will soon speak, if you will let me. And I am sure you will follow suit. However, everything... My dear, a man must be given a chance. I have not yet finished. It is a long speech, but what can one do, this is not a regular event in our national life--right? This is the first time in 30 years that we are discussing a peace treaty. I have already been speaking close to 2 hours. Another 10 minutes--grant me amnesty.

[Pa'il] If the honorable prime minister had started with this, it would have been excellent.

[Alloni] But what is the essence of peace?

[Begin] What does Me'ir Pa'il say?

[Pa'il] If you had started with this...

[Begin] With this?

[Pa'il] In 30 years, this is the first peace treaty. To begin your speech with the important things, then there would have been something to listen to.

[Begin] Then I will tell you, Me'ir Pa'il: If I had begun with this, my name would have been Me'ir Pa'il and not Menahem Begin. [laughter]

[Pa'il] This would have improved you somewhat.

[Begin] Well, we will conduct the negotiations and I would like to give another commitment to the Knesset. Before we sign the agreement concerning the autonomy arrangements, it will be brought to the Knesset for approval. The Cabinet, even if it approves that agreement, will not sign it unless the Knesset has approved it in advance, as we are doing today with the peace treaty. And just as we honor--and have honored--the commitment concerning the peace treaty, so you can rely on it that we will honor the commitment concerning the detailed agreement on the autonomy arrangements.

That is why today we are not discussing the autonomy problem. We are discussing only one single problem: the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt as it is laid down in front of you and as you have read it with all its articles and appendixes. We have concealed nothing from the Knesset. We have signed no secret agreement--either with the United States or with Egypt--and neither will we practice this in the future.

What is the value of that peace treaty? Ladies and gentlemen, for this we have made very heavy sacrifices. Not only will I not deny this, but I will be the first to admit and proclaim: very heavy sacrifices. And one of the sacrifices--the pain of it I cannot describe in a human language. But that is what we decided and thus have we determined: we, the vast majority of the house [presumably the Cabinet]. And why? A peace treaty will constitute breaking through the wall of hatred which has surrounded Israel on all sides since it was established, in fact, not for 30 but for a full 60 years and more.

We have been encircled on land from all sides by countries which have declared us to be an enemy, which maintained a constant state of warfare against us, which carried out acts of hostility against us, which waged five wars against us. And we are striving--all the cabinets in Israel--to break out of this ring of hostility; to try and reach a life of peace--without death, without orphanhood, without bereavement--to try and reach a normalization of relations, to visit each other, to help one another, to get to know each other. There are no horns, either there or here. We are a free people who want peace. Together let us develop industrial plants, set up factories, look toward the future, and not live in the past--the past is awful: what losses, what orphans and widows, what acts of cruelty!

In our own days, in our time, one cannot live in the past. It is necessary to look toward the future. And therefore we want to give--as the sabras say--this peace with the strongest and biggest of the Arab countries a chance. And if it should succeed--and with God's help, it can succeed--then perhaps, perhaps, this example will attract other neighbors as well. They will learn from life, from reality, that it is possible to live with Israel in respect and understanding, and, mainly, in peaceful conditions. Then they, too, will join, and then we will make peace with them, too. And if we are lucky enough, in our generation, to reach such an hour, then there will be peace in Israel--in all of Israel--and peace for its neighbors, all its neighbors. And then, each Jew and each Zionist will be able to say: Fortunate are we that we have been privileged to witness such an hour!

Therefore, this peace treaty is so important--the first peace treaty Israel is signing since it was established as an independent state, the first it will be signing after 5 wars, 12,000 dead--so as to prevent a war, which all agree is the heaviest on the eastern front--with its 40 million men, with an army of hundreds of thousands and perhaps more than that--from breaking out on day. To break out of the ring of hostility--this is our goal, this is our aspiration, this has been our dream.

I say with all my heart and soul, knowing all the sacrifices we have made: It is worthwhile, necessary and advisable to do this, for the sake of our people, for all our sons and daughters, for our future, and also for the peace and wellbeing of our neighbors. This is a humane deed of the first order. It is a most significant Jewish act. It is a very valuable Zionist deed. A peace treaty for the first time in the history of this nation, for the establishment of which 6 million Jews have in fact given their lives, people who could all have been its citizens and inhabitants were it not...for whom our heroes have given their lives without complaint, for which we have the mothers of the fallen sons--and they are not complaining--and which has withstood the danger in each war for its very existence and whose entire population was in danger of its life: We have overcome. In the future, too, we would have overcome, but we do not want such a situation to come about. So that we can tell all the people of Israel: There is--and there is a good hope in the heart that there will be--peace.

We are not overjoyed; there is no reason for rejoicing. We are not boasting; there is no justification for bragging. All the previous governments wanted what this cabinet is proposing to them today, and we have every respect for their efforts. But this is how it happened, that in these days we can sign the peace treaty. Therefore there is neither rejoicing nor boasting, but with humility and with great love and deep belief--on behalf of the Cabinet and with its consent--I ask that the Knesset approve today the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt along with its appendixes and its accompanying letter.

Peres Speech

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[Speech by Labor Party Chairman Shim'on Peres at the Knesset debate on the peace treaty with Egypt--live]

[Text] Mr Speaker, Honorable Knesset, in this important debate today the Alinement will raise its hand for the ratification of the peace treaty with Egypt. We have not reached this conclusion unanimously, nor have we decided lightheartedly. However, we will vote as a movement, not as individuals. Not unanimously, since not only the chances of peace but also its price were seriously considered, especially in view of the fact that the government's plan does not excite us and catch our imagination. Not lightheartedly, since it is hard to exaggerate the severity of the concessions in the Sinai and the grave problems involved in autonomy.

We have decided to support the peace treaty in spite of our being in the opposition. Our fear regarding its implementation does not stem from our being in the opposition either. The people's welfare, national considerations and not partisan considerations guide us at this great and earnest moment.

We decided to support the peace treaty as it is proposed since it is the only realistic plan at this moment to make peace. If this plan fails, peace fails, and no-peace, like peace, has dynamics of its own. The absence of peace may push the Middle East to the brink of war, while a peace treaty with Egypt may bring a chance for a wider peace. War breaks out and a people are united and stand alert. Peace is made and the entire people should make it. Now there is no way to cancel the shortcomings of this treaty without cancelling the treaty itself.

Peace, in the eyes of the Israeli Labor Party, is a major value reflecting the historic desire of the Jewish people and expressing a deep need of the State of Israel. It is not in our attitude toward peace, then, that the great novelty is manifested. It is the fact that the biggest of the Arab countries, Egypt, and the most important leader in the Arab world, Anwar as-Sadat, have, for the first time, turned from the gulfs of war to the shores of peace. Although we criticize the government for its conduct of the negotiations, we also honor its decision--a decision that has come after quite a few internal struggles, at times also at the cost of bidding farewell to its basic principles--to follow this road and to turn the chance of peace into actual policy, to translate the peace policy into the international language of a treaty.

Our reservation and appreciation stem from a contradiction we had to face. We do not have enough votes to free ourselves from this contradiction nor do we have the wish to free ourselves from the need to take part in a responsible and clear decision without hesitation.

In the debate on the ratification of the Camp David agreements we raised a proposal of our own aimed at preventing the removal of the settlements and the evacuation of the airfields. That proposal of ours failed. It is not shameful to be a minority, but it would be a mistake not to admit this. This time, too, we will make a proposal of our own. It touches mainly on the future of Judaea, Samaria and Gaza, a future on which discussion will begin in a month's time. This, as everyone will agree, is not a long way off.

Mr Speaker, there is an opposition within the government which assumes that nothing will come of autonomy. This opposition leads an easy life, since it first of all sows the seeds of distrust in the government's intentions and decisions. It foresees the future as a transient convenience. If the government's autonomy plan indeed fails, will Israeli-Egyptian relations be built as we want to see them built and established every day? Will the problem of the large Palestinian Arab population within our territory and in Judaea and Samaria disappear? Will their national aspirations decrease? Will their natural propagation stop? Will the United States then increase support for us? Will the Arab world make peace with us? And the main thing--what will happen to us? Will we want the IDF to eternally rule the destiny of a population which does not want us to rule it?

After the Israeli Government recognized a binding English document at Camp David to the effect that there is a Palestinian people with legitimate rights, with just demands, after it was proposed for this people--in the Camp David language--a temporary self-rule, as a transition to a permanent self-rule, will we tell them to forget about all this now and will we appear anew with the flags of the military authorities as a thing expressing our deep-felt desire?

We do not need a fair solution to the problem of over a million residents living in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza only to do justice to the Palestinian Arabs. We also need it in order to express the concepts of justice of the Jewish people. We are a people who do not want to rule other peoples, a people who do not want to be hurt by another's power but also do not want to use their own force in order to hurt another.

I am saying this although the autonomy plan as proposed by the government is, in our opinion, the greatest of the mistakes made by this government. Nobody asked for such a plan--neither the residents of the territories, nor Egypt, nor Jordan, nor the United States. I also think that the government itself did not really intend to keep this plan. Although, at the moment, the plan appears as a wagon on which the peace treaty is loaded, we know that this is an extremely short-term wagon and that after a fairly short while it will appear as the bond of contention over which the new and soft tissue of the peace relations between us and the biggest of our neighbors may be torn.

The autonomy, gentlemen, the Knesset members, in its first phase was born as an innocent lamb--cultural autonomy. However, already upon its first departure to the pasture of negotiations it went through another change and emerged as administrative autonomy. Then, even before crossing the threshold of reality it underwent a third change at Camp David and turned from autonomy to a self-rule of the residents of the territories. This is not the final change in it, since at Camp David the government undertook that after a while we should also reach--here I come to the word also, Mr Prime Minister, and I am quoting--a recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just demands. The government, Mr Speaker, is trying to describe the word also in terms of wonders and marvels as if in the decision to take into consideration the security concerns of all parties involved, one can expect a chance of a balance to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Let us imagine that on one scale we put the legitimate rights, the Palestinian people, their self-rule, their own security needs--since the needs of their security are also guaranteed--and on the other scale we put the security needs of Israel--security needs which are not exclusive to Israel according to the Camp David agreements. Which will be the side to tip the balance? The government's spokesmen are trying to console everyone who is prepared to accept this consolidation that the issue in question is autonomy for the people and not for the territories. This is not compatible with what is stated in the Camp David agreements, and, Mr Prime Minister, this does not agree with what you have said here in the Knesset, in the Hebrew translation. Allow me--since we all know enough Hebrew and English to be able to compare things--it does not speak of self-administration, as it is translated--listen to this, Mr Prime Minister--but of self-rule. Self-administration is different from self-rule. It is true that in parentheses it speaks of administrative council, [last two words in English], but what is the legislative [last word in English] [body]? There is none. When there is only self-rule, even in the form of an administration, and there is no legal entity above it, this is an exclusive rule. [indistinct interjection by Prime Minister Begin]

Yes, sir, there is a difference between local [last word in English] and self [last word in English]. If it were written, local government [last two words in English] I would not have claimed what you are saying. I agree with you.

Self-government [last word in English] is self-government, period. Self-governing authority, [last two words in English] is the authority for self-government, not for self-administration.

Knesset members, the question is not purely one of semantics. How, in fact, can a resident be separated from his home? How can a farmer be separated from his fields? Can we seriously tell the Nabulus residents, for example: You will rule your destiny in Nabulus but will not rule Nabulus itself? Who will rule Nabulus? The military authorities which have to withdraw? And who will rule the territories? The State of Israel--which is not the sovereign; others are not either--over the Nabulus lands? After we agreed to put off our demand for sovereignty over Judaea, Samaria and Gaza to the days of the millenium--how can we rule another's land when we promised not to rule this other person himself?

Mr Prime Minister, the government can make concessions but it must not describe a non-concession as a concession or say to itself and others that the concessions in fact only sound like concessions; they are only apparently, not practically, so. The lexicon must be responsible; otherwise we will delude only ourselves, undermine the trust in our state, undermine each man's trust of another.

Egypt emerged from Camp David with the impression that self-rule is nothing but a corridor to Palestinian Arab sovereignty over all the territories up to the 1967 borders. The Israeli Government came out with the impression that it may be a corridor to an Israeli sovereignty. This contradiction between the different impressions will start to become clear when the discussion on the powers of the authority for self-rule of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza gets underway. This will happen in a few weeks.

The alinement has upheld and upholds territorial compromise, not because it likes compromisses nor because it gives up our historic right to Eretz Yisra'el, but because it believes that the alternative to a territorial compromise is a concession of the territory, of everything. It is true that the Arabs do not agree to a territorial compromise, and why is that? Because they hope to receive everything. [indistinct interjection by Health Minister Shostak] However, autonomy contains more of a promise to them that they will receive everything. Mr Shostak, believe me both you and I deserve a certain degree of modesty. We, at least you, declared from this podium that we will not evacuate the Rafah approaches settlements, that we will not return to the international border, that we will insist on defensible borders. Do not launch unnecessary interjections.

[MK Uri Avneri] Am I allowed to make an interjection? Did I not tell you 8 years ago that you would return to the international border?

[Peres] Mr Deputy Prime Minister [as heard], I voted for this and explained why we were faced with a contradiction. We had to vote either against peace and for leaving the Rafah approaches settlements where and as they are--and we did not want to vote against peace, or the other way around. Whichever way we voted, we had to refer to and comment on the contradiction you proposed to the Knesset.

[Avneri] Did you bring a different peace, MK Peres? Ten years [after the 6-day war] in power--did you bring a different peace? Can one ignore this fact?

[Peres] Mk Uri Avneri, we built a state that cannot be destroyed, a state that is honored and with which it is desired to make peace. [Words indistinct] but only after 20 years, so, a weak state, as long as it is weak, others want to destroy it. So do not tell me there are tricks here. Something was built, something happened, a very serious thing...

[Avneri] And, still, this [the peace initiative] occurred precisely when you were ousted from power.

[Indistinct question by Begin]

[Peres] We did not adopt, but we are aware that the Knesset adopted, the autonomy plan and we accepted the Knesset's decisions as a responsible party and we propose, in the framework of autonomy, things which seem to us vital for the future. This is based on the assumption that a territorial compromise is the only permanent solution which does not involve a concession of all of Judaea and Samaria, that guarantees defensible borders and that will, in the future, also find the Arab partner needed for this.

[Indistinct interjection]

[Peres] I understand that what you are proposing is to guarantee that it [the territorial compromise] will be gradual. True, not all at once.

[Avneri] Very true, you [Peres and Shostak] are both leading up to this.

[Peres] We are also proposing the immediate establishment of defensible borders.

[Avneri] Very true, you are both leading to this in different ways.

[Peres] MK Shostak, read what you wrote in your platform; read, for heaven's sake. This may not make you more healthy perhaps but it will sharpen your memory. To extend [Israeli] sovereignty between the [Mediterranean] Sea and the [Jordan] River--really, you do not have a right to an interjection, not from a parliamentary point of view but simply because not enough time has elapsed for people to forget what you said and what you undertook, which is the opposite of what you are doing.

[Avneri] You are both correct in what you are saying about each other.

[Peres, mockingly] Mr Avneri, as usual you are the only one who is correct. I wish you long life in this important role of yours, to be the sole bearer of justice.

[Avneri] Whose plan are you carrying out today?

[Peres] We believe that the true choice is between a compromise for the sake of peace and a decision in favor of the road of war. Here, our choice is clear.

Knesset members, the Alinement, in a separate proposal, suggests that the Knesset today instruct the government to adopt minimal conditions for its negotiations on the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, its negotiations on autonomy.

We do not settle for what the government will decide since the government decided and then drew back, within 12 days, from its own decision. It is possible to say that today is not today, that yesterday is not yesterday, and today is not today either--when I heard some of your declarations today, Mr Prime Minister, and I do not want to repeat them, about a preemptive war.

[Indistinct interjection, apparently by MK Me'ir Wilner]

[Peres] Which? A counterattack if we are attacked? I heard David Levi's statements yesterday in your name about Judaea and Samaria. If one adopts such maximalist statements, the Knesset is allowed to give instructions to the government.

I want to say: none of the Alinement's guidelines contradicts the Camp David agreement, none of its guidelines poses an ultimatum. The Alinement says in advance that there are vital things that must not be given up and that the Knesset should insist on this minimum. We propose that the Knesset instruct the government that it conduct the negotiations so that the autonomy arrangement will be only a transitional arrangement, that it will not prevent a permanent solution based on territorial compromise within defensible borders; that it conduct the negotiations so that the Jordanian-Palestinian option is preferred to the danger of establishing an 'Arafat-PLO-Palestinian state, that the defense of the country against external aggression and internal terrorism will remain in our hands, that the security areas will not only provide lodging for the IDF camps and bases but will also be under Israeli control and will contain within them the settlement areas in the Jordan Valley, Gush 'Ezyon and the southern part of the Gaza Strip, that cooperation is guaranteed in developing the water sources, and, of course, that Jerusalem, Israel's unified capital, will continue to enjoy the jurisdiction, law and administration of the State of Israel.

Knesset members, this is a great hour for the State of Israel. The State of Israel of the 70's is not the State of Israel of the 40's. Today we are a strong and experienced state. It is precisely Israel's strength that enables it to undertake the risks involved in peace. We mean a comprehensive and true peace. We see, as the prime minister noted in his remarks, the dangers as well: the eastern-northern front, the murderous calls of the PLO and its leader against both Jews and Arabs. This is an organization which wants to hold arguments with Katyusha shells, to kill its opponents, to murder peace. This PLO, this organization whose depth is equal to the diameter of its submachine gun and the distance of whose sight is equal to the range of a Kalashnikov, does not stand a chance. Our rejection of the PLO is not linked with rejecting the rights of our neighbors, the Palestinian Arabs. We mean them well. We want to bestow good and honor on them, on their identity, their heritage, their children and future.

Today we are congratulating the members of the Egyptian people and their leaders. They, like us, experienced the taste of war and they, too, have decided to give the progressive hope of peace, human civilization, the priority it deserves. We mention with gratitude the important visit of President as-Sadat to Jerusalem.

Mr Speaker, today we are congratulating the Israeli Government and its leader. We did not spare them just criticism, and in the future, too, we shall call a mistake a mistake and a blunder a blunder. We are congratulating them today for the decision itself--which was not a simple decision--a decision that was made after long considerations and in the right direction.

We will act throughout the world, among our friends and adversaries, to try to make them realize there is no true step toward peace other than that decided on by the State of Israel and the United Arab Republic of Egypt with the aid of the United States.

Knesset members, a war is something that breaks out, whereas peace is something that is made. The Labor movement has done much, together with the entire people, to endure and face up to the eruption of wars. It has also done much to build the country so that it will be strong enough to call the peace in. Now, too, when we are in the opposition, we will give responsible support for the making of peace, peace that carries with it security, justice, independence and popular [amami] honor for all Middle East residents.

Arens Speech

TA201440 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1208 GMT 20 Mar 79 TA

[Speech by Likud MK Moshe Arens at the Knesset debate on the peace treaty with Egypt--live]

[Text] Mr Chairman, Knesset members: Today the hope is alive in the hearts of all Knesset members that following the signing of the peace treaty next week an era of peace between Israel and its neighbors in the Middle East will begin. However, each member of the house faces a painful and hard decision: painful because the price is so high, especially painful because of the uprooting of settlers from the Sinai, the Rafah approaches and the Gulf of Elat. Not all painful decisions are also hard. A painful decision can be easy to take when we are certain that it is the right decision. Then, we must pay the price. We are certain of the results in the wake of the decision we will adopt. This is a hard decision. We do not know what the results of such a decision will be. Only in a few years, when looking back, will we be able to decide whether we made the right decision.

On this occasion I want to dare to look at the future because, after all, experience--if not to predict the future, then at least to examine the various alternatives facing us in the wake of this treaty--should be the basis for our considerations: for or against.

We will start with some moves which I think all of us agree on, which are certain in the foreseeable future and will be more certain in the coming years. First, the organization of what we call the eastern front, the consolidation of this front and the continuous pressure exerted on the Egyptian leader to join this front. Second, the differences of opinion. I think they should be called a confrontation between us and Egypt in the negotiations on the issues of autonomy and the future of Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. While the United States exerts pressure on us, according to its well-known and declared positions, we must try to compromise with the Egyptian positions. Third, a gradual reduction of the territory under Israel's rule in Sinai, which will be expressed in strategic weakening of the State of Israel in the next few years by: 1) seizure of positions in the Sinai by the Egyptian Army; 2) deliveries of modern arms to Egypt's Army from the United States, the evacuation of IDF positions in the Sinai, and ending the activities of the IDF early-warning stations in the Sinai, transferring the oilfields and increasing Israel's dependence on the United States.

These are the moves which I think no one here doubts are awaiting us. If we could prophesy and say this weakening of Israel's strategic position will not be used by either the Arab world or Egypt for aggressive purposes, if I could be certain of this--I would support the treaty. Whoever says to himself that this damage to Israel's defense capability will be misused will find it very hard to support the treaty. I would like to go further and examine the range of possibilities, or at least part of the range of situations that could and might arise following the signing of the peace treaty. I would like to divide the future plane into two segments: under the first we are interested in the continuation of the Egyptian regime and policy toward Israel. Under the second--a change of regime, a change of goals and a change of policy.

On the first plane: What could happen? One possibility is that after the negotiations we agree with Egypt on the autonomy--on the future of Judaea, Samaria, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Following such an agreement, Jordan and Syria come to the negotiating table to hold negotiations which will bring along peace in the area.

The second possibility: Egypt withdraws from the rejection front; Egypt withdraws from the rest of the Arab world while getting closer to Isarel; agreement with Egypt on autonomy, which means peace on the southern front.

The third possibility: Egypt does not agree with the details of the autonomy. In this case there are two subpossibilities: In spite of its nonagreement, Egypt realizes its commitments undertaken in the wake of the peace treaty. I would say that this situation could be described as a nonstable peace on the southern front. Alternately, following nonagreement on the future of Judaea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, Egypt returns to the rejection front--implying hostilities and threats of war.

Fourth, the possibility of aggression on the eastern front. Here, too, we can identify two subpossibilities following such an aggression: Without Egyptian interference, this aggression does not succeed in dragging Egypt again into the labyrinth of war--I would describe such a situation as nonstable peace on the southern front. The second subpossibility: Egypt interferes in the aggression, it cannot be a bystander, it is dragged again into the labyrinth of war--which means war on all fronts.

The second plane, the plane of a change of regime in Egypt, change of goals and change of policy, can be divided in two: 1) the new regime also adheres to Egypt's commitments in the treaty; 2) disavowal of the commitments Egypt undertook in the framework of the treaty.

[MK Uri Avneri] MK Arens, you are an intellectual. You cannot omit from the range of possibilities that of Israel's policy changing, and that a Palestinian state will be established by mutual recognition. Is this a real possibility?

[Arens] MK Avneri, I have included in my possibilities that in the course of the negotiations with Egypt we reach agreement on the future of these territories. This certainly includes what you have just said.

[MK Hayim Korfu] MK Avneri, don't you feel the need to have a cup of coffee?

[MK Avneri] I am paid to sit here and interrupt you.

[Knesset Speaker Shamir] I ask MK Korfu, if you want to invite MK Avneri you can send him a note. I am asking you...

[Arens] Each one of us who examines the range of possibilities I have just enumerated--and perhaps some of us can add a few more possibilities according to which the stability is shaken--cannot help but reach the conclusion that in these instances there will be attempts to exploit Israel's vulnerability and weakened position for aggressive purposes, or at least for threats of renewed aggression. That is why each of us must try to assess the changes, possibilities and probabilities. However, that is not all. We must try to assess the significance of the situation which will be created for the State of Israel and the dangers Israel will have to face in these instances. I have made my assessment. In my assessment we have gone too far in our concessions, the risks we took upon ourselves are too great and what's at stake, Mr Chairman, is too grave.

Weizman on Military Appendix

TA211817 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1740 GMT 21 Mar 79 TA

[Remarks by Defense Minister Weizman at Knesset session--live]

[Text] Mr Speaker, honorable Knesset, concerning the lack of clarity in the amendments to the military appendix, I want to say a few words.

The team, including the foreign minister and me, ended the talks at Blair House in Washington 4 months ago. Because of this we did not finish the military appendix at the time. First, I want to say that nobody is trying to trick anyone. Anything that has been changed or will be changed is open for everybody to see.

There were several issues in the military appendix that were put in parentheses, and anyone who cares to look will see there OEOI [letters pronounced in English] meaning disagreement between Israel and Egypt. For example, the Egyptians, until the last minute, asked for permission for Egyptian military transport planes to land in region C, and we refused. This is how things remained. There was quite a long argument about what the Egyptian Air Force may do in the Sinai. I will remind you--and this has no connection with what I am saying at the moment--that Egyptian fighter planes cannot fly anywhere except in region E. Egyptian fighter planes cannot park everywhere in the Sinai--they are prohibited from flying over regions B and C, and so on. Several matters remained open and were not concluded when we returned home.

Over the last 2 or 3 days, during my discussions with Major General Tamir in Washington, we worked out changes, some of which appear here. Major General Tamir at the moment is meeting with Egyptian General Maghdub, and they are going over it article by article, clause by clause, to see what has been changed and what has not. Therefore, according to the agreement I made with him in Washington, I can announce from this podium that the changes were in wording only and were made chiefly at our request over the last 3 days. The only issue left to be concluded is the timetable for evacuating the oil region in the Gulf of Suez.

I was asked a question by MK Peres on the broken line in the Gaza Strip, the broken line marking region D, namely, a broken line east of the international border. A broken line appears and will appear on the map up to the Mediterranean.

There is another change I would like to announce which partly touches on armored personnel carriers. In region E, instead of 540 APC's for the Egyptian division we agreed there will be 480 APC's. And in region D, instead of 200 APC's for the IDF forces, there will be 180.

At this stage this is all I have to say. I repeat: No substantive changes were made here. They were made mainly at our request. It is even possible to say these are changes in our favor. In case questions arise in the course of the evening, Major General Tamir is waiting at the end of an open line in Washington. Anyone who wants to ask him questions can go down to my office and ask him on the open line...

[Moshe Shamir, interrupting, asks for permission to pose a question]

[Weizman] Wait a minute, let me finish, Moshe. I listened to you attentively, with or without pleasure...

[Interruption by MK Alloni sarcastically asking for further information before listening to Shamir's views]

[Weizman] I simply say that because of the developments there was a delay on this subject. I repeat, Major General Tamir is there with legal adviser Rosenne, with my team, with a map--the most important map is there. Therefore, any Knesset member who wants to ask a question to clarify matters in his own mind is invited to my office to an open direct line with Washington...

[Interruption, apparently by MK Shulamit Alloni, asking who is covering the expense of the line]

[Weizman] The expenses are covered by the Defense Ministry and this will be covered by the $3 billion, of which $0.8 billion is a grant and $2.2 billion is a loan. Moshe, you wanted to ask a question.

[MK Moshe Shamir] With your permission, Mr Minister, you spoke of the broken line of region D. In the first text submitted to the Knesset it says that region D reaches the Mediterranean, and in the corrected text this expression was dropped. Does this mean that region D will reach only to the border of the Gaza Strip?

[Weizman] Incorrect. What is binding me is the map, and I have just checked this with Washington. There will be a broken line drawn on the map up to the Mediterranean. Thank you.

Weizman Speech

TA220140 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0029 GMT 22 Mar 79 TA

[Speech by Israeli Defense Minister 'Ezer Weizman at the Knesset debate on the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt--live]

[Text] Mr Speaker, Honorable Knesset: I am trying to go back over my 30 years in independent Eretz Yisra'el, from the day of the establishment of the IDF and the beginning of the war of liberation, to seek and ask myself on what occasions I have felt exalted, excited; when I have felt something different from every other day. I have no doubt that on this night--[thought left unfinished] and I can only thank the person who commanded most of Israel's armies during the war of liberation and moved the debate this evening to more emotional lines than those we have heard in the many hours up to now. I am referring, of course, to the deputy prime minister.

In November 1977 I had the privilege of flying to Egypt, for the first time without having to look out for my tail. One has to look after one's tail, one's tail--the tail of my plane. I flew to Egypt in daylight at an altitude of 25,000 feet for a meeting with the then Egyptian minister of defense, my colleague General al-Jamasi. To my pleasure, whereas he was then called minister of war, today General 'Ali has changed his title to minister of defense. I flew west of Alexandria over Dab'ah, to Al-Fayyum and began to descend toward Cairo. I wish I could describe to you with the poetry that I lack my feeling when to my left I saw Cairo West Airport, in front of me I saw the Cairo International Airport, Bilbays, Inshas, Hulwan, and I saw the expanse of Egypt and its sands where some of my best friends and subordinates met their deaths. One of the things that characterizes flying in a plane on a clear day--especially in the Middle East where visibility is good--I saw the expanses. I saw the expanse to the east where we live--the difference between the green and the brown and the yellow. Like many of those in this house and my good griends, I had memories of all those days when we all went through Israel's wars from our youth. It is a wonderful and great feeling to fly over Egypt without missiles, without flack, without MIG's and to land honorably and meet the Egyptian minister of defense.

I was lucky to be born in Eretz Yisra'el. I was born in Tel Aviv, but was brought up in Haifa. Like all those of my generation, I grew up between two basic problems. I grew up with the education, aspirations and urging of our teachers and leaders to build the country in all aspects. And I grew up between two problems: the problem of the growth and development of the country and the problem of the friction between us and our neighbors, the problem of friction between the Arab population and ourselves. The town of Haifa where I grew up was an example of this, with half of it having a Jewish population and half having an Arab population. I am not mistaken when I say that from the outset of Zionism, the leaders of all parties have sought the road to joint life between us and the Arab world.

I met the Egyptian president for the first time here in this building in November 1977. I went to Egypt for the first time, as I said, in December 1977. I have been lucky in that I was there five times in the past year. I hope that I am not stepping out of line if I say from this platform--and I am not out of line--that to the best of my recognition and my understanding, the Egyptian people and its leaders want peace. I felt this in the streets of Cairo. I felt this in its shops. I felt this in my meeting with the Egyptian people in the streets of Cairo. I only hope that after 16 months of deliberations to conclude the peace agreement, the fire that burned a year ago has not died down there as has happened to certain degree, to my regret, in the State of Israel.

We have gone through many wars, and excuse me if I quickly compare what I feel from my knowledge of war and what I feel from my lack of knowledge about peace moves. We are all talking about peace, and none of us has experience with it. We are all talking about how things will be without any of us having experienced this. We can all make judgments one way or another and use our imaginations to the best of our abilities. One thing is clear: We are well versed in war. I would not be surprised if in certain respects we are living in fear of the unknown. We are living in fear of our hermetic enclosure in our country for over 30 years when Rome, Paris, London and New York were much closer to us than Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Nabulus and Hebron. As people well versed in war we know that in war one requires a supreme national effort concentrated into a very short period of time. For a short time all the people's resources are concentrated on victory.

We have had victory. We have had few failures. To the best of my imagination, the problem of peace is to concentrate an effort over a longer period. Over a short time we have always known and we will always know how to concentrate effort, but we do not yet know how to do this over a long period. We will have to concentrate a huge effort over a long period with many problems, with many ups and downs with respect to our hopes and aspirations.

I admit this and I join my friend Yiga'el Horowitz, whose approach to the issue of peace between us and Egypt I regret. But to my regret I must join him with regard to my fears about domestic issues, the economic issue, the social issue which may not be the issue to be discussed today, but I agree with the deputy prime minister that we must mention it today. I hope that the result of peace and the result of a situation relatively different and more normal than that which we have today is--if there is no immigration to Israel--that at least some people will return. I hope that among the other things that we can do is that we will increase industry and increase the technological effort in the State of Israel and this might bring some of our friends back to Israel.

One of the things said here on more than one occasion--and I disagree with this--is that we have lost our independence with respect to the United States. I have no doubt that in certain respects we are more tied today. I do not think we have arrived at what we have as a result of a lack of independence. First and foremost, I am convinced that our arrival at the great day when the president of Egypt and its leaders are prepared to meet with the prime minister on Monday and sign a peace agreement after 30 years is a result of Israel's firm stand, first and foremost, in all the battles and wars we have fought. I do not know if today is the day and this is the place, but I must say this: In the 23 years from 1956 up to today--perhaps to our regret, but this is a fact--we have destroyed over 1,200 enemy planes and we have destroyed over 4,000 enemy tanks. By the way, most of them are Soviet made and this too is worth remembering. We have not reached this point easily and not because we bent our knees before anyone or because we yielded. We have fought wars, gone through battles and we have won. I do not feel that we have lost our independence with respect to the United States.

The world--and again this is not the place to analyze this--is full of interdependence. America is dependent on Saudi Arabian oil, and the Saudi Arabians are dependent on American dollars. The Soviets are clearly dependent on the power of the United States, and the United States is to no small degree dependent on the future and power of Soviet Russia. While we are small in size, I propose to every Knesset member that we not make ourselves spiritually small. There is no doubt that after we return to the international border without Sinai we will get even smaller, but one does not measure the power and greatness of a people by its size. These are not measured by territory, but by its spirit, by its power, by its army. Our (?satisfaction) with this situation comes from the United States, from 1974, from the interim agreement which I favored--about $8 billion. Today, in the next 3 years, we will get another $8.5 billion, part as a loan and part as a grant. Even in Israel this money is no small sum, and this is worth remembering tonight as well.

If as a result of this agreement and as a result of sacrifices that we are about to make in the wake of the return of Sinai... [thought left unfinished] the airfields--and it is not only the airfields of Etam and 'Ezyon--we are also talking about Refidim and the field at Sharm ash-Shaykh and Al-'Arish. As a result of this difficult move... and no one should compete with me and I will not compete with anyone as to who is hurting less and who is hurting more; believe me, airfields hurt me no less than anyone else.

But, if next year, at the beginning of our absorption of new equipment...and I do not know if there are other countries that will get this so quickly--if we are talking about F-16's or tanks or cannon--and it is a pity that we have to get this equipment. But when I was asked on television in the United States: Why do you need so many arms, I said and I repeat, that one pays a lot for good things and that bad things are even more expensive. War is much more expensive than maintaining the army which, to our regret, is big, massive, strong and which costs billions of pounds and billions of dollars.

I have no doubt that there are risks regarding security. [indistinct interjection] Have I said something that amuses you? To our regret we have to spend a lot of money on arms and I do not enjoy it. [indistinct interjections] I am the last to argue with those who think that Israel's dangers are over. [sentence as heard] We have gone through periods when it was thought that Israel's dangers were over and we were surprised. I hope that this does not happen to us again. The northern and northeastern fronts--Syria, Iraq and Jordan--are a front with great military power: tanks, planes, artillery and missiles. The IDF is on constant alert, and in the past few days even more so in view of possible developments in the Middle East and in the Arab world and in view of a possible threat from Syria, Iraq and Jordan which, together, can launch about 5,000 tanks and over 1,200 planes against us. We are aware of this. We only hope that this will not happen.

From the day we began fighting in the Middle East it has always been clear that without Egypt the Arab world will not go to war, and Egypt has gone to war alone several times. Perhaps we led it on. I consider and I am convinced...we led...the Sinai campaign, the Six-Day War--we did not lead it on but...[indistinct interjections] I am sorry. We met together. Thank you, and I propose to all members of the house to try to imagine and consider what great change we will see from a military point of view when Egypt is not a threat. I want to repeat the details of the agreement and remind you that area A of 50 km will contain one division of 230 tanks. And between that and the international border--areas B and C--in 3 years' time there will be no military force apart from four battalions of border police with light weapons. This is a totally different situation from what we had in the Sinai campaign, a totally different situation from what we had in 1967 in the Six-Day War. I hope we do not reach this point, and I am asked many times and we ask ourselves: What happens if As-Sadat disappears? What will happen if another leadership arises? I consider--and here I might be taking a risk--that the leadership which we know today will continue on As-Sadat's path. But if things change and if the direction changes or if As-Sadat changes, I am prepared to say with full responsibility that the military agreement we have reached, which gives 150 km between us and the Egyptian division, is a reasonable and more than reasonable agreement.

There is one thing I hope for: that future Israeli governments, that future defense ministers and chiefs of staff watch carefully to see if there are violations or changes in the military situation in Sinai. I hope we take this very much to heart.

I do not wish to speak at length, but there is one thing I have to say: I hope that you are not going to pin me on the slip of my tongue earlier with respect to Sinai and 1967. I hope I did not slip up. [indistinct interjections]

There is one thing that anyone who has commanded armies or anyone who has commanded land, sea or air forces knows and will admit: Any army can have the best of weapons, it can have the best equipment, the air force can have the most modern and best airplanes--we have them; there is no country apart from the United States which has the F-15, and we have the excellent F-15; we have numbers of tanks and a quality of tank which I doubt Great Britain has--but this agreement will bring one thing: We will be able to tell our youth that we have done our best. We will be able to tell this to our reserve soldiers and to our regular forces in the air, on land and on the sea if, God forbid, the time comes when there is a turnabout and we have to go back to the same life as we had before this agreement and call upon the army and the reserves and call up the air force, the armored corps and the navy. We will be able to tell them we did our best because an army has no greater power than fighting spirit. There is no greater power than spirit, not cannon, not the tank and not the plane. There are people sitting here who have gone through wars with little equipment and a lot of spirit, and one of the things that we have to take care of now that we have a lot of equipment is that we have a lot of spirit.

There is one more thing I want to say in conclusion, and this is perhaps the main thing about the implementation of peace. To my joy--as I said when I began my remarks--I have had my first contact with the Egyptians. The document is good. The clauses are important. We have been working on them for 16 months. We made changes. We added and we subtracted. For the most part, peace will be determined through the relations between the two peoples. In the main, peace will be determined if we understand, first and foremost, the Egyptian people and if they understand us. I believe that at the moment there is a huge gap in understanding. I believe that at the moment there is great suspicion on the Egyptian side--as has been said by other Knesset members--that Israelis will come--as my predecessors said--to teach them how to grow cotton, to teach them how to build houses, to teach them how to do certain things. Let us go slow. They do not like being taught. They are a proud people. They are a nationalistic people. They are a people with problems. No one should think that this is simple. This is a people with hunger, with problems. If you have seen the streets of Cairo, the delta....

On the other hand, there are great fears on our side. I know this. There is great fear and this sometimes surprises me. I propose to all those who have great fears that they remember primarily that the IDF is ready. They must also remember that through understanding between the two peoples we will achieve those things that we have wanted to achieve for so many years.

For me, as a person who has taken part in most of Israel's wars, today is a great moment, a moment in which I believe that when I once looked through the sights of a plane I did not know if I was shooting in the direction of peace or bombing for this target [peace]. But if we did this...looking at some of you sitting here as fighters in Israel's wars, I think that as a result of those battles, those victories, those shells and those bombs as well as those moves of building and creation and the desire to arrive at an understanding between the two peoples we are being rewarded and we will arrive at the beginning of the road with the signing in Washington on Monday.

Dayan Speech

TA220156 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0052 GMT 22 Mar 79 TA

[Speech by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan at Knesset debate on the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt--live]

[Text] Mr Speaker, honorable Knesset, the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement put on our table this evening is not a pastoral peace agreement. This is not a realization of the vision of the millenium when nation shall not lift up sword against nation. This is a peace agreement which contains military appendixes and which is accompanied by the construction of airfields. This is a peace agreement involving assurances of increasing the IDF's power. This is political [word repeated in English] peace treaty. However, this is a realistic, detailed peace agreement, this is a realistic [word in English] peace agreement, this is a peace agreement intended to bring about the establishment of normal relations between Egypt and Israel, like any other two nations. This is a realistic peace agreement that does not whitewash or ignore the facts and the reality in which we live. It also contains a trial period. There is a 2-year period in this agreement during which we will remain in the eastern half of the Sinai Peninsula after the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel takes full effect. This agreement contains a 2-year test period in our relations with Egypt after the negotiations on the establishment of autonomy. During these 2 years we will not be in the entire Sinai, but we will be in Sharm ash-Shaykh and we will be in the airfields, in the settlements and on the Egyptian-Israel border.

If we move farther away from the oilfields, we have the U.S. promise of an oil supply for a period of 15 years. This is a realistic [word repeated in English] peace agreement and not once during our negotiations about it did the Egyptians try to evade any [word indistinct], clause or detail that will lead to a promise of realizing full normal relations between Egypt and Israel. We had disagreements with them, but not on this issue. There was no attempt on their part to achieve an interim agreement or a partial agreement, or a little of this or that, but to a full agreement, to a complete revolution in the set of relations.

From the Arab point of view this agreement is twofold: It is an agreement of peace and an agreement of acceptance. It is an agreement of peace that should bring an end to the state of war, to the status [word in English] of war and to establish peace relations. Further, it is an agreement of acceptance of the State of Israel. Here lies our victory, the Israeli victory. This agreement is Israel's victory, the triumph of Israel's way.

I do not overlook the military campaigns and the role they played in the achievement of this agreement. However, the IDF's victories in the military campaigns did not impose the peace on the Egyptians. We did not conquer Arab capitals and did not impose peace on them. These four heavy IDF campaigns against Egypt contributed only to an Egyptian defeat. At the end of each of these campaigns, the Israeli Defense Force found itself nearer to Cairo than before.

We did not impose peace on them, but we made them give an account of themselves. It should be said to As-Sadat's credit that after the Yom Kippur War he abandoned the Nasserist conception [word in English] that what was taken by force will be regained by force. He abandoned the Egyptian-Nasserist conception of: If we failed this time we will prepare ourselves anew for the next war. He turned completely around, turned to the road of establishing peaceful relations with Israel instead of war.

This is a great risk on the part of Egypt, on the part of the Egyptian leadership and leader. This is a great risk, and the repercussions for this move of his in the Arab world bear evidence to this. This is also a farsighted conception on his part, and for this we should appreciate and congratulate him. We should appreciate him and congratulate him on the realism [word in English] in approaching peace both from the point of view of the future of the Egyptian people and from the point of view of the format of peaceful relations between Egypt and Israel.

This evening we are not dealing with the autonomy issue, but I would like to make two points on this. First, this issue of self-administration for autonomy is incorporated within a larger, more comprehensive and decisive framework, the framework of the 5-year transitional period, actually 6 years after the signing of the peace treaty. Principles were determined for this transitional period, and received not only our approval; Egypt signed them together with the United States, not only us. There are two most important principles. When one talks of autonomy, the autonomy should be viewed in this framework of a transitional period and on the basis of these two principles.

The first principle is that all elements of a state, of relations between states, exist only between Israel and the Jordanian Kingdom, and not, in any form, between us and the autonomy--neither within Judaea and Samaria nor between us and Nabulus, and not in the Gaza Strip--but only between us and Jordan after the 5 or 6-year transitional period, after signing the agreement. The peace negotiations, the determination of borders and the security arrangements involved are the exclusive inheritance or property of Jordan and the peace settlement between us and Jordan. It is not only that there are no such elements--elements similar to them or derived from them--in this system of autonomy, but things were clearly stated to be exclusively reserved for the relations between Jordan and Israel.

The second thing concerns the location and duty of the IDF in this 5-year transitional period. In this 5-year transitional period, the IDF will remain on the present borders, along the Jordan River and in positions of control along this Jordan border. This is the situation on the Israeli-Jordanian border. The IDF will also remain within the territory itself, in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza. The same holds true for the Egyptian border. The IDF will be deployed along the international border. When normalization between Israel and Egypt takes effect, the IDF's checkpoints will have to be passed through, and the visas of the Israeli Interior Ministry will have to be received in order to cross the international border located west of the Gaza Strip. So, the IDF will be deployed along all the borders: The Israeli-Egyptian border stretching from the sea Elat, and the Israeli-Jordanian border in the 'Arava and along the Jordan, and at definite places within the territories themselves. This definition is not ours alone. It is a joint definition which Egypt and the United States have signed.

These two elements of relations between one state and another--which are solely between us and Jordan--and of the IDF's control of and location on present borders, with Jordan and within the territories themselves, are the major guarantee of the status [word in English] prevailing during this period in this area.

Finally, I would like to say that I am very happy that this evening, there will be more members voting in favor of the peace agreement than members who voted for the Camp David agreement when it was brought here for endorsement. Also, those who disagree and who will vote against cannot tell when and how we will have an opportunity for a better peace agreement with Egypt than the agreement lying in front of us now. Therefore, tonight there will be more who favor endorsing this treaty, since it will be most difficult for anyone, even among the opponents, to reject the Egyptian hand extended to us in peace.

Begin Closing Speech

TA220230 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0105 GMT 22 Mar 79 TA

[Speech by Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin at Knesset debate on the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt--live]

[Text] At this early hour, as I come to conclude a debate which has lasted 2 days and 1 night--an unprecendented debate in the 30 years of the Knesset--I would like first of all to talk about the importance of this debate. This is one of our parliament's greatest hours. From time to time, as a veteran member of this house, I have claimed that usually, in every democratic parliament, the days are filled with pettiness: legislative work, a debate on a tax, on a municipality and more. However, there comes a day and a night, there is an hour in which the entire greatness, grandeur and splendor of a free and democratic parliament rise before the entire nation and all the people. This is the night, these are the 2 days, this is the hour. No one is forcing anyone. This morning, too, the Knesset will vote according to its own will and the decisions of its free factions. There are factions whose members will vote according to their recognition and on their own. The decision will be fateful, of great significance and--without exaggeration--it can be said, historic, because we are standing--as we believe--at a turning point, at least in terms of the relations between two Middle Eastern peoples, with the hope that it will be the foundation for a turning point between ourselves and the others.

Here, now, we are privileged to witness a great hour in our national parliamentary life. We are fortunate to have reached such an hour.

Mr Speaker, I have debated with myself over whether I should polemicize with the members who rose to object to the peace treaty, or with those who voiced--either at their expense or at mine, either at their expense or that of the Cabinet--words which are incorrect, words which even constitute an offense. I have come to the conclusion that it is better if I avoid these polemics. I shall remain silent and leave things as they have been recorded, and will not reply. However, with a bit of a certain emotion, which I shall not call by its right name, which was present in certain words, I shall advise the ones who voiced them to read, or perhaps pursue again, Psalms Chapter 109, and no more.

I came to give one answer this morning, not to a Knesset member, but to Dr Khalil, my counterpart, the Egyptian prime minister. Yesterday, he reacted to the words of my opening speech at the Knesset, when I reacted to his own words. I would like to point out that were it not for Dr Khalil, who rose and announced three things--ancient Jerusalem will be severed from the State of Israel; Israel will return to the 4 June 1967 lines; and that a Palestinian state will be established in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza--I would not have voiced our three points from this dias, for one simple reason: What I said is, in my opinion, self-evident. There is no need to say it in our parliament. The vast majority, as is well known to every man and woman in Israel, stands behind the three proposals which I reported here. However, the Egyptian prime minister cannot think that he, unilaterally, on the verge of signing the peace treaty, could hurt the deepest feeling of the Jewish people wherever they are by speaking about dividing Jerusalem, a return to the 4 June 1967 lines--which in themselves invite war and bloodshed, and the proof of this is experience--and the establishment of a Palestinian state, which would be a threat to the very existence of the Jewish state, one of the miracles and wonders in the history of the human race. He cannot imagine that he can thus hurt our being and expect us to say: Nothing has happened, and the atmosphere is excellent and will remain silent.

After my comment, he claimed that my words sour the atmosphere. Not so. Your own words, Dr Khalil, have soured the atmosphere, and I have only commented on your words, as, in fact, you forced me to do.

One cannot claim that an offense to our people does not sour the atmosphere, whereas the reaction to the offense is the cause of an uneasy atmosphere. There are only two alternatives: Either everyone keeps quiet, or everyone speaks out. I hopw that this will be a lesson in the next few days. I am prepared, once again, to propose to my counterpart, the Egyptian prime minister, a verbal armistice agreement. Let us wait. We are going to sign a peace treaty in good faith, with hope and goodwill. We want to fulfill every word we have signed and under which we will sign. Do not hurt our people's feelings. You must know what Jerusalem means to this people. Do not hurt the feelings of our nation; do not tell it that a renewed danger will lurk above its head. Then I will not have to react from the podium in this free parliament, and we can all go to Washington and sign, as free men, the most important document ever to have been signed by authorized representatives of the Jewish state and an Arab state.

[MK Tawfiq Tubi] Mr Prime Minister, I would like to ask you: Why is it an offense to the feelings of the people to say that the Palestinian Arab people also have a right to establish an independent state? Why, people danced in 1947 along the streets of Tel Aviv at the decision to establish two countries...[interrupted]

[MK Moshe Shamir] The Jews danced and the Arabs murdered, this is what happened.

[MK Tubi] Danced with joy over the decision to establish two countries?

[Begin] Mr Tubi, you asked respectfully, and I shall answer you respectfully. Please, I would like to answer him, but with respect--as the question was presented, civilly.

When there was dancing in 1947, the Jews did not dance because Jerusalem, as well as Bethlehem in Judaea, was taken from them. Rather, they were happy that they would have their own country after 19 centuries of wandering all over the world, of being burned at the stake, of murder, pursuits, ghettos and--in the last generation--of the extermination of one-third of the people. That is why we who were still in the underground did not dance, but said that we were not bursting out in dance because our motherland was partitioned. So we said: Understand our people's feelings, for all of a sudden--granted, after a war of independence of great historic value and with many victims--they have lived to see the day when they knew that they would have their own government, their own parliament--for the Jews--their own army, which would defend them so that no more Jews would be dragged to the gas chambers, never again would a small Jewish child be hanged to death. This is what the rejoicing was about, on the renewal of the days in the past when we had national independence.

Please, I ask you as an Arab--and you know that I have respected the great Arab people from the dawn of my youth, as well as its contribution to human culture--take a look at what happened. Think for yourself about that phenomenon. Did the surrounding Arab nations and our Arab neighbors in Eretz Yisra'el accept that decision, or did they decide to drown it in blood? We all remember the announcements made then: The Jews will be annihilated. That is why we were advised not to declare our independence. And that is why there were arguments within all the parties. But we did establish our country. Do you know what happened then, MK Tawfiq Tubi? To maintain that independence in a small part of the country we sacrificed 1 percent of the population.

In current terms, this would have meant 30,000 dead. Can you imagine what would have happened to this nation if it were to sacrifice 30,000 of its sons? This is what happened in 1948, because the neighbors [interrupted]

[MK Shamir] And today, in this treaty, you are forcing the Knesset to agree to erect memorials on Israeli land to the Egyptian murderers of 1948 in Negba and in Yad Mordekhay. The Knesset will sign this today! Memorials will be built here to Egyptian infiltrators of the year of the war of independence.

[MK Uri Avneri] Have respect for the fighters! Respect for the fighters! I was there, you were not. Have respect for the fighters from both sides. Have respect for the Egyptian soldiers who fought against us.

[MK Shamir] Respect for the fascists who fought at Stalingrad--would you agree to that? Respect for Nazi murderers who bombed London--should a memorial be erected for them?

[Speaker Shamir] MK Shamir, I would ask you to stop. We are nearing the end of the debate, and we would like to finish it.

[MK Shamir] I am furious about this hypocrisy and this lofty verbiage.

[Speaker Shamir] MK Shamir, I ask you to allow us to end the debate without storms.

[Begin] No, there is no storm. But I would like to say, Mr Speaker, that I am entirely impressed by the energy MK Shamir is demonstrating at 3 o'clock in the morning. He still has so much energy, and he has already been shouting for a full 2 days and 1 night.

I would like to answer you, so no, be kind enough to listen to me, sir. I would like to refer to you, as I have already replied to the other question. I would like to tell you before the public and the world that on this, too, our views differ. I would like to say, as both a Jew and a Jewish fighter, that I see no harm--but on the contrary, an honor--to this people if we erect a memorial to the soldiers of another nation who have fallen in a fair battle; no fault, but the contrary. This is what I think. This is my opinion. You may think differently. [indistinct interjections]

[Begin] Look how fortunate I am: I speak in the morning, and an Arab, Druze, Jewish coalition rises against me. Enough. There were polemics, but I think that we have exhausted the problem.

In such special situations, I would always suggest to every Knesset member that he act in accordance with the great ethical rule of Hillel the elder: Do not do unto others what you dislike yourself. And once again I will say: A word to the wise.

Mr Speaker, on the idea of the autonomy, certainly it is possible to threaten us and scare us, criticize it, reject it and even scorn it; everything can be done. However, ladies and gentlemen, the fact is, and today one can say this out of full recognition--that this idea was the key to achieving the peace treaty with Egypt. Without it we would not have gone thus far, and only this idea did this. This is no reason for special rejoicing, but the fact is that even my friends from the Alinement, my honorable opponents, are submitting a proposal which includes their own plan for an autonomy. This means something.

For this plan was rejected totally and outright by you, whereas today the entire house understands that this was an important, positive idea and it was the only one which allowed us to arrive at a peace treaty with Egypt. True.

I will once again publicly say: We will have a year of struggle, and it may be difficult, perhaps both from within and from without. Perhaps various voices will be heard. I declare that we wholeheartedly want to realize this idea and allow our Arab neighbors to administer their affairs by an institution they themselves will elect in a free, democratic and confidential vote, each with his own ballot on the day which should be, for them as well as for us, a great day. For the first time they will go to the polls as free men, without fear--we will guarantee that they have no fear, if they want this--and elect their own representatives, who will administer their daily affairs in all the fields, in all areas of life.

[MK Wilner] Pardon me, Mr Prime Minister. What you are doing now in the West Bank shows what kind of freedom. The whole affair of the autonomy is only a garment for As-Sadat to agree to the continued conquest.

[Speaker Shamir] MK Wilner, you have already spoken today.

[Begin] Mr Wilner, in that case, wait until As-Sadat comes here and then speak out. Your interjection is addressed to As-Sadat, what do you want from me? I do not agree that this is eyewash for As-Sadat. This is what you learned from PRAVDA. But when I was in the Soviet Union, I heard a joke, throughout the entire Soviet Union: The PRAVDA [truth] has no IZVESTIYA [news] and in IZVESTIA there is no PRAVDA. [general laughter] Do you know what IZVESTIA is, at least?

[Wilner] Do you know what forged autonomy is? This is what you are proposing.

[Begin] Now keep quiet. If this is your source of education, I warn you of it. The simple truth is precisely that President as-Sadat did not seek any eyewash, and we may have an argument with him. What I said holds true, but I must add: We have not misled anyone. From the very first we said that this autonomy will be established and fulfilled on condition that there is security for Israel in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza, and from them. This is a condition sine qua non. This is what we told the U.S. President, President as-Sadat and on every occasion in public, in all the conferences and meetings; a condio sine qua non. One is interdependent upon the other. So for this, too, I would ask that--as the Sabras like to say--a chance [word in English] be given, an experiment. Let us take it. How can we live together in this tiny country, where the entire width from the Jordan River to the sea is 70 km, 40 miles? There are no many countries as small as this on the globe. To partition it, to have a border running through it, was this the ingenious solution--so that the border would turn into a border of blood? How do I know this? from the mouth of the teacher of teachers, called experience. Can one not learn from 19 years of experience? We shall not run away from the teaching of this special teacher. Therefore, what was our sin in wanting the possibility of trying to live together? What do you say, Mr Wilner? What would you have liked? that we permit our soldiers to walk where they will be stoned from all sides? Each stone cannot only injure, it can also kill! So we want to live in peace.

[Wilner] We want political freedom. You have forbidden gatherings, you have forbidden (?protests), you are forbidding the people to make even one political statement in the West Bank: You immediately send the army, the police, kill, injure, detain students--like you did in Bi'r Zayt. There is now a curfew in several places. You are not allowing anyone to open his mouth. I demand that the murders and terrorism in the West Bank be stopped.

[Begin] Mr Wilner, will you let me speak, or will you force the speaker to call you to order three times? It can happen in this house sometimes. You must allow me to speak. I did not interrupt you with even one word when you were on this podium.

[MK Avneri] Mr Prime Minister,

[Speaker Shamir] MK Avneri, we have no time, we want to end the debate. We have no time. I would like you to finish and let the prime minister speak.

[Begin] Uri, I have already said you are a friend of [word indistinct]. I have been staring at you constantly and I cannot understand why you specifically wore such a red tie over the past 2 days. [general laughter] This I do not understand.

[Avneri] I shall explain to you when the opportunity arises. But, Mr Prime Minister, this time I would like to [interrupted]

[Speaker Shamir] You do not have the right to speak. I ask you to keep quiet. I call you to order.

[Avneri] The reference is to criminal law. I would like to ask that the soldiers be ordered not to open fire on demonstrators and not to hurl stones at them. [indistinct interjections]

[Begin] In any event, there is one thing I can tell all those who interject: I have a reason to be grateful to them. They have totally eliminated my fatigue. Totally. So, I am beholden to and thank them.

Mr Speaker, the concept of the autonomy has created the possibility of signing the peace treaty with Egypt as well. We want to do this under one sine qua non: No more borders. We live together in mutual respect, in understanding, in freedom and without offending any party. Then you will see how beautiful Eretz Yisra'el will be under these conditions. Let us try to build it this way. I wish we had been listened to in 1948, when all the organizations--the Hagana, the IZL and the Lehi--called on our neighbors at the time: Stop the bloodshed. Come, our Arab neighbors, and let us coexist and build the country together for the glory of generations to come. This is what we wanted even 30 years and more ago. This did not come about. Five wars were waged against us.

[MK Tawfiq Tubi] You proved this in Dayr Yasin. You did this then.

[Unidentified Knesset member] The example of coexistence was Dayr Yasin.

[Begin] Mr Speaker, if the Knesset approves the peace treaty with its annexes and the accompanying letter in a few minutes, the road will be paved to hold in Washington--presumably next Monday--the first ceremony of the signing of the peace treaty by President as-Sadat, myself and also by the President of the United States. I think, Mr Speaker, or hope that 1 week from now, either in the order I shall now specify or in the opposite order, President as-Sadat will be in the Knesset and both of us will sit on either side of you and we will sign the peace treaty, with all the Knesset members seeing that, indeed, the peace treaty is being signed. I will go to Cairo and, as President as-Sadat has said, in the heart of the capital of Egypt he and I will sign the peace treaty. How do I know? I would like to inform the Knesset members that yesterday I received a personal message from President as-Sadat. He asked me to announce that he herewith confirms that every word President Carter told me Saturday evening in a personal conversation concerning these three ceremonies is true. And President as-Sadat added: I will honor each word President Carter spoke to you.

So, I still do not know the date. Neither can I promise that this will come to be, but I rely on President as-Sadat's announcement with respect to honoring this commitment, and I would like to emphasize: There was a Knesset member who scoffed at these three ceremonies. I would like to tell him and everybody: It is very important psychologically, which also means important politically, that each Arab in the Middle East see that, indeed, the authorized representative of Egypt and the spokesman of Israel are sitting together and signing the treaty both in Jerusalem and in Cairo. This will also be a type of cornerstone for the building of normal relations. That is why we proposed this and I am glad to inform the Knesset that this proposal has been accepted both by the U.S. President and by the Egyptian president.

Mr Speaker, at this late hour as I end this great debate which will be remembered for a long time in the history of our nation because it was very serious, very deep and painful and yet very significant, I would like to ask you permission, Mr Speaker, to send with the consent of all the Knesset members a congratulatory message to the president of Egypt for deciding with courage--and this required courage--in the face of a chorus of wolves from all around, from Damascus to Baghdad--to come and talk peace with Israel. We invited him and we replied to him with peace.

From here I am sending the congratulations of the representatives of the people of Israel to the great people of Egypt: Five times our sons have met on the battlefield. Each of them did his duty; each soldier of every army who is sent to the battlefront is only doing his duty. Therefore, we have no complaints. We are not living in the past. We want to build a new future and we are sending congratulations to the Egyptian people in anticipation of the new relationship about to be established between them and us.

Mr Speaker, let me now say a few completely personal words. I would like to tell my old friends in this house, which is my second home as I have spent half my life in this house, what I feel in my heart. It is true: There is joy that we have reached such a time. There is apprehension and concern for the future. There must be this feeling. There is also fear in the heart. This is completely natural. Yet, despite all these and along with them, there is also the recognition that we have reached a turning point. I hope it will be a turning point which is completely positive for us, for the Egyptian people and for the other nations surrounding us, for we, with all our heart and soul--all of us together--want to reach the most simple and humane of goals: peace. And, God willing, would that we will be able to return from the signing and tell our people: We have brought peace unto you.

Knesset Endorsement

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[Text] Mr Speaker, Honorable Knesset: The proposal for the conclusion of the debate on the government's statement and the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt on behalf of the factions of the Likud, MAFDAL, the Democratic Movement, Change and Initiative, Agudat Yisra'el, Pitu'ah Veshalom, the Citizens Rights Movement, the Independent Liberals and Ya'ad:

The Knesset endorses the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel together with its appendixes and accompanying letters.